

THE
BEST EXERCISE
FOR
CHRISTIANS

In the worst Times.

In order to their Security against
Prophaness and Apostacy.

Good and useful to be consider'd and improv'd
by all the Lovers of God, and Believers in
the Lord Jesus Christ, for their direction
and preservation in these times of the over-
spreading of Iniquity and Transgression,
from the too great Deluge of Errors and
Impieties threatning our destruction.

Proposed to Consideration

By J. H. an unworthy Servant of God
in the Gospel of his Son.

Mal. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17.

*Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another,
and a book of remembrance was written before the Lord
for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his
name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts,
in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare
them, as a man that spareth his own Son that serves him.*

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TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader,



Read I pray thee also with candor and consideration this Epistle; for as it informs thee something about this Treatise, so it also supplies some defect in it, and contains something useful to be considered.

The ensuing Treatise was first in its substance the matter of some of my more private Exercises some years since; which being copied out upon the desire of one (who I wish may be as diligent to peruse and make good use of it, as I was for his helpfulness ready to copy it) and afterward viewed by some of my friends, met with so good respect, as induced me to make it publick, that others also might have benefit by it. To which I was the rather willing, because it proposes and excites to such exercise as is good and needful at all times, for all that

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think of Heaven, and desire the enjoyment of God and Christ; and being in the way thereto, would not fail thereof through the temptations befalling them in the world. But especially in evil and perillous times, wherein such temptations most abound. What is there more behoveful for us then, or can afford like safety and satisfying to us, as Gods love towards us? and therefore what should be so much endeavoured after by us as to obtain that, and having obtained it, secure it to our selves? Indeed there is a general and universal love of God (herein also mentioned) in and through the gift of Christ the Son of God, to be the Saviour of the world, extended to all men, wherewith God prevents all our endeavours, and under which all men are, during the day of his grace and patience, and which men need not (in a sort) endeavour for; it being attested in the Scripture absolutely for and towards all, without proposing any condition for attaining it; expressed in such sayings as these, that God sent his Son the Saviour of the world: Gave him to be the Propitiation for our sins: That Christ came into the world to save sinners: Dyed for all, and is risen again: Bare our sins in his own body on the tree: That God hath made

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made him Lord of all, and prepared a feast in him for all people, *Isa. 25. 6. and the like.* These have no condition proposed for our being included in them; for its never said, God sent him for us, or Christ dyed for us, if we believe or repent; nor is it said, he came to save sinners, if they believe and repent: But without that if, It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; : That he dyed for us, while yet without strength, ungodly, and sinners; not suspending it upon our believing and repenting: As if in case we believe not, he dyed not for us, or came not to save us. For though it is true, that there is a salvation (and that the main end of his coming) that we cannot have, except we repent and believe; yet the end of his coming, is not to be confounded with the event and effect. He came to save Israel out of Egypt, and to bring them into Canaan generally, yet many of them perished by the way, *Exod. 6.8. with Numb. 26. 64.* and were not eventually brought in thither. So Christ came to call sinners (not if they will repent, but) to repentance, or that they might repent: That was the end of his coming and calling, not the condition of

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it; and such an end, as is oft not answered in the event, witness Prov. 1. 23, 24. Isa. 50. 2. & 66. 4. where he complains, that when he called, they refused, and answered not. Besides, that there are acts of his saving, in which he hath saved, and doth save us, before we can be capable of coming to him for salvation, or of repenting and believing. The very foundation of Repentance and Faith towards God, lies in those principles of the Doctrine of Christ, or Word of his beginning, in which he is asserted to have died for all, and to be risen again: Which had he not first done for us, so as to have ransomed us from under the first judgment, and from the power and jurisdiction of Satan as he would, otherwise, have exercised the power of death over us, had he not in that respect destroyed him, and made peace for us; yea, and did he not save us by upholding and preserving us, and prevent us with his calls and grace, bringing salvation to us, we could be in no capacity of repenting, believing, and being further saved by him. In such sense he hath partly saved us by his death, before his calling us; having abolished death, 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. and partly is saving us through his mediation, during the time of his calling us, yea, before
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our obeying him, (yea, and whether we obey his call or not, Rom. 2. 4, 5.) his long-suffering being to be accounted salvation, 2 Pet. 3. 15. and so he is the Saviour of all men; and not onely of them that believe, or upon condition of believing. The feast is prepared for ^{all} men, in which is all fulness of Grace and Eternal life given us in Christ, 1 John 5. 11. whether men come to him for it, and receive him and it, in and with him, or not: and the invitation prevents mens coming to it, and is given, and is to be given, whether men come or not, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. It is not said, nor ordered to the servants to say, Go tell them if they will come, I have prepared my dinner, &c. but absolutely, Go tell them, I have prepared my dinner, my Oxen and fatlings are slain, and all things are ready, come to the Wedding: This is to be, and is by Wisdom and her Maidens said to the simple, and persons without understanding, Mat. 22. 4. Prov. 9. 3, 4. And they who here go with an If, or condition in their mouthes as to these things, they do not their message rightly, they keep not the wholesome form of sound words used in the Scriptures: they let not men see certainly, that Grace and love of God which is to be shewed them, that

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it might be as a powerful Argument to beget faith and affection to God and Christ in them; and to make them that duly consider it willing to come; and which if rejected, leaves them without excuse, and aggravates their sin, and makes evident the equity of their condemnation with a witness. Indeed in Promises and Threatnings, which alwaies respect the future; there is an If, or condition understood, where not expressed often; as appears 1 Sam. 2. 30. Jer. 18. 7, 8. Jonas 3. 4. but not in declarations in matters done. Now I say, this love and salvation so generally expressed, is not that to be sought, to be obtained, or that we may be under it, we being all preventingly under it; and too many content themselves with being under the enjoyments of its streams, in having the patience and bounty of God exercised toward them, and in hearing that God hath loved them while sinners, and Christ hath died for them: sitting down content with this, or some more common gifts vouchsafed in, or through such means, as upon the account thereof are afforded; not minding that though those things be true without condition, and so ought to be proposed, yet they were not done without an end, which ought to be pursued. Though its
not

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not said, Christ died for all, if they will live to him; yet its said, He died for all, that they who live, might live to him: Though its not right to say, God is patient towards men, and doth them good if they repent, as if not otherwise; yet its right to say, that he is patient towards them, and doth them good, that they might repent: It's not handsome to say, The Gospel is sent to men, if they will believe, yet it is to say, It is sent to men, that they might believe; and in believing be justified, sanctified, washed, renewed, and be made new creatures, having on them the Wedding garment, without which they may not partake of the feast, nor be the Subjects of Gods choice love, in which true blifs and happiness are to be enjoyed; nor be made partakers of the special salvation, in which Christ is the especial Saviour of them that believe, the Author of Eternal salvation; unto which things, as to our being the Subjects enjoying them, there is an If, or condition: And therefore, that these ends of what Christ hath done, and doth, might be obtained by us, its needful both that the Gospel be declared clearly and plainly to men, by those who are thereto called; and that where declared, men set their hearts to it, to mind it,
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that they might (in another sort or sense) find this general love and salvation, that is to say, as to the knowledge, belief and efficacy of it upon them, it being (as is shewed in the Treatise) the way by which men are and may be begotten and brought to Repentance, Faith, and the New Birth, and so become the objects of the special love and salvation: The Word in the Gospel is the seed of Regeneration, 1 Pet. 1. 23, 25. The Gospel of Christ, even the preaching of the Cross, that Christ died for our sins, and was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures, is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes, Rom. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 22, 24. & 15. 1, 2, 3. the preaching that Christ died for all, and to what end, and that God was in Christ reconciling the world, and is the Word of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15, 19. The Grace of God, *οὐκ ἐν ἔργῳ ἀπονομία*, saving to all men, teacheth, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly. That Teacher is to be attended to, and that teaching learned, and they are greatly faulty, that slight or darken it, or overly bear it, or rest in a notion of it, without being brought under the special love by it.

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Though yet neither is this all that men should attend to in hearing and receiving it, to be made in Christ by it, and so objects of special love. All the business is not done and over, in that: it's needful also to abide and go on therein; for we have adversaries will endeavour to pull us back, or pervert us from it. Pharaoh who hindred Israels going out of Egypt, endeavoured when gone, to fetch them back again: So deals Satan; and as all that were brought into the way to Canaan, attained not to Canaan, because some turned back in their hearts, and some such as had believed and sung his praises, afterward through unbelief perished: So there is a danger here too. And therefore as Moses his work was not all over, when he had brought them over the Red Sea, and led them to Mount Sinai; so neither was the Apostles, when by their Ministry, and Gods blessing thereon, they had brought any to Christ, and so to Mount Sion, now they were jealous with a godly jealousy, for such as they had espoused to Christ, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve, any of them might be corrupted from the simplicity in him, 2 Cor. 11. 25. Least by any means they might be moved, and the Tempter should tempt them,

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them, and render their labour frustrate, 1 Theff. 3. 5. Therefore they wrote Epistles to them, wherein they instructed, reprov'd, warn'd them, provok'd them to watchfulness and stedfastness in the faith; So^{to} run that they might obtain; so to hold fast and abide in Christ, as not to lose their reward, nor fail of the Grace of God; directing them how to behave themselves, so as to be preserved in Christ unto eternal life. And that's the main scope and drift of the Treatise here presented, that being in the special love of God, thou mayest be kept in it.

But I am sensible that some things might have been spoken to that I over looked in it; for some perhaps by the love of God spoken of in the Text, understand not that love whereof he is the Subject, and we the Object, Gods love to and of us; but that whereof we are the Subjects, and God the Object, our love to and of God. And indeed upon consideration, I had thought of inserting some things in that sense also. Not because I think I have taken it amiss, but because I think that also might not have been unprofitably spoken to as one sense of the phrase, though the matter comes much what to the same; for the lover of God is the choicely beloved of God, as
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it is said, I love (namely with an approving, delightful, love) them that love me, Prov. 8. 17. Psal. 147. 11, and my Father hath loved you, because ye have loved me, John 16. 27. they are the called according to his purpose, and all things work together for their good, Rom. 8. 28. to them God hath promised the Crown of life, and a glorious Kingdom, James 1. 12. & 2. 5. Onely to supply that defect, I shall here briefly note, that in those words [Keep your selves in the love of God] so taken, there is signified:

Note 1. That the real and hearty Believers of the Grace of God, love God for his love believed by them; so in 1 John 4. 19. We love God, because he first loved us: First loved us, namely, in sending his Son into the world, while we were sinners and ungodly (for that's it in which he not onely bath commended, but still and always commendeth his love to us, Rom. 5. 8.) not onely to be our Teacher, but also to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live through him, Vers. 9, 10, 14. This love rightly perceived, and heartily received, turns the heart to love God:

*1. So as letting go or rejecting all other Gods, or Objects of trust and worship for the
sake*

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sake of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, beloved also as the Son of God and our Saviour, to chuse him for its God, and to say of him, He is my rock, my fortress, my God, in him will I trust, Psal. 91. 2.

2. *So as for the sake of Christ, and God in him, to count all things loss and dung (where this love is indeed hearty and strong, for there be degrees of loving God) yea, to forsake father, mother, lands, life, all things for the knowledge and enjoyment of him, panting and longing after fellowship with him, Phil. 3. 7. 8. 9. Luke 14. 26. 33. Psal. 42. 1, 2. & 27. 4. Yea,*

3. *So as (though with the loss of all things, where this love is vehement) to desire and endeavour the promoting of his glory, yielding up its power and members thereto, 1 Cor. 10. 33. Phil. 1. 20. Act. 20. 24.*

4. *So as it loves, observes and keeps his words and sayings, and doth his commands, John 14. 21, 23. 1 John 5. 3.*

5. *So as it loves and waits for his salvation willingly, tarrying for it, Psal. 40. 19.*

6. *Yea, and so as it loves his name, and his people, delights^m and cleaves to them, Isa. 56. 6. 1 John 3. 23. & 5. 1.*

By which tryal may be made, how we have received and believed the Grace of God, whether

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ther in vain or not, examining and proving our selves, whether we be in the faith, and Christ by his Spirit and its efficacies be in us, or not, 2 Cor. 13. 5. that being the way by which the rightness and effectualness of our receipt of the Grace of God, or its ineffectualness may be discerned; as these Scriptures signify, 1 John 1. 6, 7. & 2. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 29. & 3. 7, 8, 10, 14, 19, 20, 21, &c. that where it's otherwise, we might (not question the reality of Gods love, of compassion and well-willing to us, but believing that) give the more earnest heed to the things heard in the Gospel, so as to receive them more heartily: turn at his reproofs therein, and yield up to the power therein working, that we may be renewed thereby, lest we be rejected of him, Heb. 2. 1. & 6. 7, 8. and where we find his Grace effectual in any measure, we may be more encouraged to mind it still, that we may both be preserved therein, and be perfected thereby; and this the rather, because (as is here implied too.)

Note 2. Such as are in the love of God (in this sense also) may possibly not abide therein, but be corrupted from it, if not careful to preserve themselves in it, yea, there is danger hereof, especially in evil times.

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times. That this is so, may be evidenced partly,

1. *In what is said to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus; viz. That he had left his first love, Rev. 2. 4. and of the Angel of the Church of Sardis; viz. That he was dead, and what remained in him was ready to dye; whereas he had more rightly received and heard, Rev. 3. 1, 2, 3. and to the Angel of the Church of Laodicea; viz. That he was lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, Vers. 15. implying nothing, as if he had never been otherwise, nay, surely his boasting rather was an effect of his reflecting upon himself, and what he had found there, so as to grow secure and careless therethrough, as judging he had got such a Stock of Grace, as could never be spent, and come to nothing; as Israel so kind in her youth, as to follow God in a Wilderness, being enriched by him, fell off from her affection to him, so as to have no love at all for him, saying, We are Lords, we will come no more at thee, Jer. 2. 23. 31. Partly also and more fully,*

2. *In what our Saviour saith, Matth. 24. 12. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; yea, so as to miss of salvation, as the next Verse implies,*

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implies, wherein he addes, But (in opposition to those former) he that continues to the end (as implying that the others had love, but continued not to the end in it) shall be saved (implying, that those others should not;) and yet saying their love should wax cold, he implies it was sometime hot: And therefore there is need of the exercise here commended by the Apostle Jude, for keeping our hearts in a warm temper towards God. But here it may be objected.

Object. That the Apostle John saith, He that is born of God sinneth not, because his seed abideth in him, neither can he sin, because he is born of God: how then can a lover of God fall therefrom?

Ans. To this (because not spoken to in the Treatise) I shall say the more: And so,

1. *That by born of God, is either meant one framed to the mind of God, through the knowledge of and acquaintance with him, so as he is made in a high degree like him, a spiritual one, as opposed to the*
a carnal,

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carnal, and babes in Christ, 1 Cor. 2. 14. with 3, 12. the perfect, 1 Cor. 2. 7. as distinguished from such as are yet short; one that discerns all things rightly, God and Christ, and his excellencies, so as highly to love and fear him, emptiness and vanity in all things else, so as not to be taken with them; imperfection and mutableness in himself, so as he durst not trust himself from him, or out of his way; one into whose heart wisdom is so entred, as that knowledge is become most pleasant to his soul, and the fear of the Lord most prevalent, so as discretion preserves him, and understanding keeps him (Prov. 2. 10, 11, 12.) in such fear of God, and love to him, that he cannot sin, because he cannot find in his heart, or be perswaded to neglect Christ, and his counsels, and ways, or be withdrawn from them. And no doubt, but in following on to know the Lord, and abiding in Christ, he will so teach us of all things, write his Law, and put his love into our hearts, subdue and mortifie our corrupt affections and passions, and make us so wise, as it will be quite contrary to our natures (our new natures) to sin willingly
against

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against him, however strongly provoked or tempted thereto, as in Joseph, that said, How can I do such wickedness and sin against God? Gen. 39. 9. Yea, and we ^{may} attain such height and strength of love to him, as that many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it, Cant. 8. 6, 7. and as to be perswaded on good grounds, with the Apostle, that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God (even from loving God) in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 37, 38. but then all right Believers and Lovers of God, are not so spiritual; as appears, 1 Cor. 1. 12. with 3. 1, 2. nor have attained such wisdom and knowledge of him. Thence the Apostle saith not, I am perswaded nothing shall be able to separate you as speaking to the Romans, as in Vers. 13. If ye walk after the flesh ye shall dye) but us, as speaking of himself and the other Apostles, and such as they in perfectness and growth.

2. Or else by born of God, rather may be meant the same with the abider in Christ, as in Vers. 6. He that abideth in him, sinneth not; and so Chap. 2, 29.

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He that doth righteousness (*that constantly and perseveringly doth it*) is born of God; and 1 John 5. 1. He that believeth (*that is, goeth on believing perseveringly; for words of the present tense its observed usually (or often) imply continuance*) that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, and so its like that in Psal. 119. 23. They that keep his testimonies, and seek him with the whole heart, they do no iniquity, &c.

3. Or, He that is born of God, *that is, that is led by the Spirit of God, as Rom. 8. 14. he sins not, nor can sin, namely, as while so led, no such fruit can be of him; in opposition to Gnosticks, or others, that impute their sinnings to Gods Spirit, say, they are tempted, or led of God to it.*

4. And then the word Cannot is taken in a compound sense; as when it's said, An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor good tree bad fruit, Mat. 7, 18. *that is, abiding such; but a bad tree may be made a good tree, and a bad man a good, and a good tree, a right noble Vine, may*
de-

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degenerate into a strange plant, *Jer. 2. 21.* and so a good man into a bad, a lover of God, to leave his love of him; and that by entertaining,

1. *The love of the world*; For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: *and of that, even Fathers and young men, such as had overcome the wicked one, it seems, needs to be admonished also, 1 John 2. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. as the Apostles themselves were by Christ, Matth. 6. 24. Luke 21. 34, 35, 36.*

2. *Corrupt Doctrines*; such as lead to high-mindedness, pride, carelesnes, or corrupt any ways from the Faith and Gospel: Therefore the Apostle warns the Fathers and young men also, of the Antichrists, *1 John 2. 18. 26. 2 John 8. as Christ did also his Apostles, Matth. 24. 45. 23. 24, 25. Principles of Atheism, Infidelity, rejecting the Scriptures, and the Hope and Judgement to come. Thence the Apostle Peter warning of the Mockers in the last days, that would say, Where is the promise of his coming, bids the Believers take heed, lest being led*

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away with their error, they should fall from their own steadfastness, 2 Pet. 3. 4, 5, 17. By such means men may be withdrawn from their love of God. Or,

3. By thinking themselves to have attained, and so growing remiss: So men heated with their labour, and thinking they have wrought enough, sitting down, may grow cold, or catch cold; and, He that deals with a slack hand, becomes poor, Prov. 10. 4. Or,

4. Through the same conceit, withdrawing from the Assemblies and Societies of Brethren. Thence the Apostle opposes these to those that separate themselves, Jud. 19. and forsaking the Assemblies, is opposed to holding fast the profession, and ushers in wilful sinning, Heb. 10. 23, 25, 26. for how can one be hot alone? Eccl. 4. 11.

Need therefore of this Exhortation now, especially when Atheism and evil principles so abound: And we may be encouraged to take the Apostles Exhortation, because he further implies, that,

Note 3.

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Note 3. Believers may in a diligent minding the Grace of God, and using the means appointed of him, through his promised presence and assistance, keep themselves in a warm temper in the love of God. So our Saviour implies in Matth. 24. 13. in that having said, The love of many shall wax cold, he addes, but he that continues to the end, shall be saved. Men may continue warm in their love then to the end, and why not? A man in a good way, may easily keep himself in it, though he meet with Cheats or Robbers, if having good directions, a skilful, faithful guide, using strong persuasions to follow him and his directions, and a strong Guard to secure him from violences, he will but adhere to, and follow them; and nothing but amazing wilfulness (Jer. 2. 12, 13.) may endanger him, being brought into the love of God; The same that brought us into it, will keep us in it (namely, the love and grace of God in Christ) if minded, kept in view and obeyed by us; whereto we have good directions in his Word and Doctrine, and the Holy Spirit of Wisdom is given from

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Christ to be our Guide and Director therein: And taking heed thereto, and making use of those Gifts and Ordinances appointed by him to that purpose, God and Christ will guard and secure us from Satan and his instruments. Thence its said, Forsake not wisdom, and she will preserve thee; love her, and she will keep thee, Prov. 4. 6. and, He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son to secure him from miscarrying, 2 John 9. 1 John 2. 24, 25. The same exercise or perpetuated fire that will warm a man when cold, will easily preserve a man in his heat, when heated by it, if not forsaken; and both the Word and Love of God are compared to fire, and hot burning coals, Jer. 23. 29. Cant. 8. 6, 7. Keep we but to them; and they will keep us warm, and as for exercise to keep us warm. Its further implied,

Note 4. That it's a good and useful exercise that we are here directed to; viz. To edifie our selves on our most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. For,

1. Therein

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1. *Therein we are put upon minding Gods and Christs love to us, that being the great matter held forth in the Faith, whence it's called, The Gospel of the Grace of God, Acts 20. 24. and that minded, will nourish as well as beget love and warmth thereof in us toward him.*

2. *Thence we shall gather strength against our enemies, and what would prejudice us against God, and cool our love to him; for (a little to adde to what is somewhat too barely mentioned, p. 177. l. 25, 26, 27.) therethrough we may grow in wisdom; for he that cleaves more firmly to Christ, the Wisdom of God, shall receive more of the Spirit of Wisdom from him; and He that walks with wise men shall be wise, Prov. 13. 20. for, in the mystery of Christ, held forth by and among them, and in Christ himself, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2. 3. and, the wise man is strong, and the man of understanding encreaseth strength, Prov. 24. 5. for, wisdom strengthens the wise, more than weapons*

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weapons of war, Eccles. 7. 19. *Thence the being rooted and built up in Christ, and his mystery, is the way to be preserved from such as would intice us, Coloss. 2. 2, 3, 4, 7. As also thence we shall be more filled with love to God and Christ; and, Love is strong as death, Cant. 8. 6. yea, and therein we may warn one another of, and arm one another against our enemies and coolers, and instruct and encourage one another, and provoke to love and good works, and so strengthen one another, 1 Thess. 5. 11, 14. Heb. 10. 23, 24. Two are better than one to keep from falling, or help up again, Cant. 4. 10.*

3. *In the fellowship of holy men also is spiritual heat: Thence also Solomon tells us, Two is better than one; for if two lie together they will be hot (fervent in spirit and in love to God and one another) Cant. 4. 11. For there God commands the blessing and life for ever, Psal. 133. 4.*

4. *And then praying in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Faith and Love is the way to obtain more Spirit and Grace from God,*

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God, Matth. 7. 7, 11. Luke 11. 13. and thereby we may have more experience of him answering our prayers, which engages to love him the more, and so tends to encrease in us, and keep us in the love of him infused by him, Psal. 18. 1. 3. 4. & 116. 2. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my prayer, &c.

But though these things might have been more largely handled in the Treatise, yet it being sent up to the press before I thought of doing so, and in the press before I thought it was: And what is there said about keeping our selves in the love of God in the other sense of it (which I look upon as the more proper and genuine sense) including and leading to this, it shall suffice to have given these hints of them here. Which having done, I shall detain thee no longer from the Treatise it self. But wishing and praying for Gods blessing on, and with both it and thee, that my cost and pains therein be not lost; and with desire of thy prayers for mee, and thanks to God
if

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*if thou meetest with blessing in, and
benefit by it, I leave thee to God,
and rest,*

Lyn, March 17.

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Thy Friend and Servant in
the Gospel of Christ,

John Horne.

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THE



THE
BEST EXERCISE
FOR
CHRISTIANS

In the worst Times, &c.

JUDE 20, 21.

But ye, Beloved, building up your selves on your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your selves in the love of God, waiting for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

THE Apostle Jude writing this Epistle to them that were sanctified by God the Father, ver. 1. (separated by him from the world unto himself, through the prevalencie of his heavenly Call) and preserved by Christ Jesus (from the Apostacie and back-slidings where-through many others had miscarried) and called (to his service and confession of his Truth;) after salutation of them, in which he desired further mercy to them, ver. 2: and that

B

page

peace and love both from Christ to them, and from
 and in them toward one another, might be multi-
 plied; informs them of the end of his writing
 this Epistle to them, Namely, to exhort them to
 contend earnestly for the faith which was once deli-
 vered to the Saints, ver. 3. Namely, that it might
 be kept pure and immaculate amongst the Church-
 es; and that because of certain men, ungodly per-
 sons, forewritten to this Judgment, as abusers of
 the Grace of God, and turners of it into wantonness,
 who were crept in amongst the Churches unawares,
 and become Teachers that impugned the Truth,
 & denied the only Lord God, and the Lord Jesus, v. 4.
 either in their Conversation in denying their sub-
 jection & service to him, giving themselves up to
 lasciviousness & wantonness, or in their Doctrines
 concerning him; as by comparing it with 2 Pet. 2.
 1. it appears, or indeed by both. To arm them a-
 gainst these corrupt persons, that they might nei-
 ther by their corrupt Doctrines or practises be se-
 duced or perverted from the faith, but might ear-
 nestly contend for it (both for the profession and
 honour of it, against them.) He

I. Mindes them of the danger of sinning and
 backsliding from the truth after they had recei-
 ved and acknowledged it, by the dreadfulnes and
 impartiallity of Gods judgments upon those that
 in former ages (& so by consequence in these ages
 too, in which God having more clearly discovered
 his Grace to men, and in a more glorious way
 doth more expect a worthy receipt of & an answer-
 able return for it,) have rebelled against him, and
 lived vitiously and wickedly before him.

To this purpose he instances, first, in the pe-

ple of *Israel*, who though they were *God's people*, & he had done wonderfully for them, in saving them out of the land of *Egypt*, yet they afterward not answering his so great goodness with answerable fruit in some measure, but after so great engagements to believe, yet not believing, were therefore afterward destroyed by him, ver. 5.

Secondly, In the *Angels*, who being glorious Spirits, or set in a first Principallity, or seat, left their own (or proper) habitation, and so kept not their first estate, abode not in the truth, but departed therefrom (as *Peter* hath it) Cast down to Hell, and reserved by God in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great Day, ver. 6.

To admonish and warn all other Angels, (as the Messengers and Ministers of God's Word are sometimes stiled) to take heed to themselves and to their Doctrine, to continue in the Truth, and not apostatize from it as these had done : And thirdly, In *Sodom and Gomorrhah*, and the Cities about them, who (though great and populous Cities, yet) giving up themselves to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, ver. 7.

Secondly, After these instances of God's Vengeance upon men for abuses of his goodness, and apostatizing from, or failing of his grace, he compares those deceivers & ungodly persons whom he would have these Saints contend against with those forementioned *Sodomites*, fallen Angels, and unbelieving *Israelites*, ver. 8. To the *Sodomites* in that they had defiled the flesh. To the fallen Angels, in that departing from the truth of God they

were become *filthy Dreamers* (inventors of Lies and Fallshoods, and spreaders of them, to draw away men from the name and faith of Christ (like the false Prophets, *Jer.* 23. 27. 32.) & so from subjection to his Lordship and Government, whose Lordship and *Dominion they despised*, as the Angels probably did through their pride as the occasion and spring of their fall: and, to the *Israelites*, as in not believing, & in *speaking evil of the Dignities*, God had set in his Church, as also in the world; as they did against *Moses* and *Aaron*. ver. 8.

Thirdly, He convinceth their evil herein by the contrary carriage and demeanour of *Michael the Archangel*, who (though a glorious and powerful Angel, yet) *contending with the Devil about the Body of Moses*, durst not bring against him, being also a power (though a wicked one) a *rayling accusation*, but, said, *the Lord rebuke thee*: in which instance whether the Apostle allude to that of *Joshua* the High Priest in *Zach.* 3. 2. (where such a like passage is read, that the Devil standing at his right hand to resist him the Lord said, *the Lord rebuke thee, Sathan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee, &c.*) or, rather to some other passage which the Apostle might read (as the following Prophecie of *Enoch*) in some other Records which till that time were preserved amongst them, but are now lost as to our knowledge, may be a Question. It may seem the later rather, because it is said, that the dispute was about the Body of *Moses*, of which there is no mention in that of *Zachary*. Now to that demeanor and carriage of *Michael* he opposeth the carriage of

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of the false Teachers, that he herewarns of : Michael would not rail upon, or bring railing accusations against the Devil. ver. 9.

But these blaspheme, or speak evil of those things (or so many things, as) they know not, even of such Dignities (or, Glories, ὡς καὶ δόξαι,) as they should reverence, the Powers over them; or else the Glorious things of Christ which they have not acquaintance with, & what they know naturally as brut (or unreasonable) Beasts, what they know by their brutish senses or carnal mind, in these they corrupt themselves, or are corrupted. ver. 10.

Fourthly, He denounces a wee against them, and shews the reason thereof from the wickedness and wretchedness of their wayes. *Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain (envying, and persecuting their better Brethren, more sound in the Faith and acceptable to God in their services than themselves,) and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, (or, as others render it, as a reward, namely, of their forementioned wickedness in hating their Brethren, and the way of truth,) they have gone astray in, (or been powred out in) the error of Balaam, which was the teaching Balak to lay stumbling blocks before the children of Israel, and so to tempt them to eat things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication, Rev. 2. 14. so these for reward, as Balaam did, laid stumbling blocks before the right believers and worshippers of God, leading them by their corrupt Doctrines (or also as a recompence thereof being given up thereto, as Rom. 1. 26, 27. by their licentious and wanton practises) to communicate with the Idolaters of*

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the world in their Idolatrous worships, and to indulge the flesh in lusts of uncleanness, and perished in the gain-sayings of Korah; in such rebellious oppositions of the power and Lordship of Christ, and the Dignities authorized by him as Korah practised against God in Moses and Aaron. ver. 11. Yea, he yet further describes:

Fifthly, Their evil Case and Way. *These are spots* (says he) *in your feasts of Charity when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; Clouds they are without water* (that is, such as boast themselves, and make shew of being some greatly gifted persons, but they give no profit or refreshing to them they drop their words upon) *carried with winds* (that is, with sundry and diverse Spirits and Doctrines, & not guided by the one Spirit and truth of God.) *Trees whose fruit withereth,* (or, such as are in the end of the harvest towards winter corrupting and rotting their fruit, such as yield no savoury fruit; yea,) *Trees without fruit,* (without any good fruit in Doctrine and Conversation, they bring in none to God, nor do any real good in their Generation,) *twice dead and pluckt up by the roots,* (as unfit for fruit or profit to the Church of God, as such trees be, being also not only dead in Adam and in themselves, as from him, or in him, as all men naturally are or were; but men after some life given them in and received of ^{them} also by Christ, they have died again, lost that life & sap they received from him, and being given up to Sathan for their neglects or contempts of Christ, they are pluckt out of him, have no root or standing in him, or in the Grace in him, as ver. 12.

Raging waves of the Seas, foaming out their own shame,

shame, (troubled and troublous boysterous persons, acted and made unquiet by their lusts and evil spirits that have influence upon them, and therefore they in their boysterousness and unquietness of Spirit, foam out, speak, and vent forth their own shame, their evill principles, guilt of conscience, or vain-gloryings in things that discover their destituteness of the fear and Grace of God within,) wandering Stars that seem to have light, and profess that they know God and can discover him and his truth to others, but are not fixed in Christ, and therefore wander into evil and erroneous principles, and perhaps go about too from place to place to corrupt others with their delusions.)

For whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, for whom the greatest rejection from God, & saddest distress and misery in the depths of Hell for ever are reserved as their due deserved portion, as being sinners of the highest degree of wickedness, because they deny the Lord that bought them, and corrupt others from the faith of him. ver. 13.

Sixthly, He confirms the Truth of what he had said about the sadness and wretchedness of their estate by the Prophecie of *Enoch the seventh from Adam*, which though we have it not recorded elsewhere in our Bibles, yet was by some other Writings in those dayes handed to them.

And Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all the ungodly of them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed, and of all the hard speeches which un-

godly Sinners have spoken against him, ver. 14, 15. and then :

Seventhly, Gives a further Character or Description of them, to whom he applies that Propheſie, and it may ſeem, firſt, with reference to the laſt claufe of it. *Theſe are murmurers* (namely againſt God and his Servants, like the *Iſraelites* of old in their unbelief againſt the Lord, and againſt *Moses* and *Aaron*,) *complainers*, (the word ſignifies, faulters of their deſtiny, lot, or condition, not ſubmitted to, or content with the Providences of God to & about them) and then with reference to the middle claufe of the ſaid Propheſie, *Walking after their own ungodly luſts*, not keeping them to the word and will of God ſet before them in the Goſpel, but as complaining of the purity, ſeverity, or ſimplicity of that they break thoſe bonds, and tranſgreſs thoſe bounds that they might walk after their own imaginations, both as to faith and manners. *vi. 6. And their mouths ſpeak great ſwelling words* (as of their parts, worth, attainments) or as in *2 Pet. 2. 18, 19.* (the parallel place to this Epistle) *They promiſe others liberty*; they talk of being free from and above thoſe rules of faith and worſhip that Chriſt hath preſcribed, and promiſe others freedom and liberty from ſuch tryalls, perſecutions, or temptations as they ſee the faithful cleavers to Chriſt exerciſed under, will they but liſten to them: yea, they ſpeak as if they had their heaven and happineſs, Kingdom and glory here, while yet themſelves (as he ſaith) are ſervants of corruptions Having mens perſons in admiration for advantage, or profit-ſake, flattering and commending mens perſons, their greatneſs, parts,

or places for some gain to themselves.

Eighthly, Having thus at large described them and the evil and wretchedness of their way and condition, he fortifies them against them, by putting them in mind that this was no strange matter, nothing but what the Apostles of Christ had forewarned them of.

But, ye Beloved, call to minde the words which were before spoken of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you, that there should be mockers (Deceivers) in the last time, walking after their own ungodly lusts, ver. 17, 18. and then,

Ninthly, Gives yet a further Character and description of them, and shews the fulfilling of those words in these persons, that they might not mistake them, as to the persons he warns them of, and that we in after-ages might know them, saying, *These be they that separate themselves (divide themselves from the company and fellowship of the true worshippers and Confessors of the Doctrine of Christ, as not one in faith with them, or as seeking to avoid those sufferings and persecutions, that they were then exposed to, probably pretending more holiness, but really casting off Christs government, yoke, and discipline in his Church.) sensual (or led by their carnal understanding and imagination, having no higher principle to guid them, and so favouring of such animal or sensual things only) not having the Spirit. (The Spirit of faith to make them live by faith in the hope and expectation of the coming and Kingdom of Christ, which these deceivers denied, and made a mock of, and so of the eternal life that God hath promised to those that wor-*
ship

ship him, and trust in him by Jesus Christ. ver. 19.

Now after all these things having so variously and abundantly both described these Deceivers, & admonished the right Believers of them, he comes in these 20 and 21 verses to exhort and counsel them to what might be of greatest concernment to themselves, and one another in opposition to the way and practise of those ungodly persons, and that they might be kept from their infection and the dangerous fruits thereof. *But ye Beloved, building up your selves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keep your selves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* ver. 21, 22: wherein we have

A serious and heavenly counsel given to faithful and unfeigned believers for their preservation in the Grace of God, and attainment of eternal life and happiness ~~and~~; wherein is

1. The compellation, term or title wherewith he addresses himself to these to whom he wrote. *Ye Beloved.*

2. The Distinction of them from, and opposition of them to those ungodly Deceivers before described. Those ungodly ones were such as separated themselves, forsook the Assemblings of themselves together, being sensual and not having the Spirit. *But ye Beloved. Ye are not of them.*

3. The main thing counselled to, & to be aimed at by them, and that is in verse 21. *Keep your selves in the love of God.*

4. The means and course to be taken and used by them to attain that end, and that is in ver. 20. and that is two-fold. 1. *Building up your selves*

on your most holy Faith. 2. Praying in the Holy Ghost, keep, &c.

5. The manner, posture, or frame of heart in which they were to do all these things, viz. in proposing to themselves the ultimate end, *Eternal Life*, to have their hearts and minds exercised to, and waiting for the most necessary means as from Christ toward them as to their attaining thereof, namely, *the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*, without which nothing of those other great things exhorted and directed too, could be to any purpose either done, or attempted by them. *Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal life.*

The two former, the Compellation, or Title given these persons to whom this Epistle was writ, and their distinction from the ungodly and deceivers before described and warned of, we shall not insist upon much, only we might note from the first,

Obf. 1. That such as abide in the Truth of God and walk therein, when others turn from it, abuse or oppose it, are worthy of, and are to be respected with more love by those who are over them in the word of the Lord, and minister the knowledge of God amongst men, than such as slight and depart therefrom, and so they were Beloved of the Apostles and Servants of Christ, as well as of Christ himself in their Ages:

For,

This word (*Beloved*) signifies not only pitied, commiserated, or persons for whom good is desired, for so much love may and should be testified

to

to others whilst there is hope for them that they may be saved : as *Paul* testified such love to the unbelieving Jews , who *stumbled at the stumbling stone, and submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God*, Rom. 9. 33. and 10. 1, 2, 3. and it is to be testified to all that have not sinned to death, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. with *John* 5. 16. but (*Beloved*) is, more intimately affected, valued , esteemed, owned, delighted in, and desired : as, so Christ is called God's *Beloved* , *one in whom his Soul is well-pleased*, Isa. 42. 1. with *Matt.* 3. 12. 18. and 3. 17. *This is my Beloved, or, well-beloved Son, &c. Cant.* And so Christ is also called by the Church his Spouse, *Her Beloved One* , Cant. 1. 13, 14, 16. It is a word implying and signifying more indear- edness of affection towards the persons so spoken to and stiled : and therefore usual in the writings of the Apostles to Brethren in the faith and confession of Christ: and never to strangers from , or much less the enemies to it. By their use of which, they signified, either

1. That the Brethren, Believers in Christ, were dearly cared for, valued , and prized of God and Christ , objects of their especial care and affection, and partakers of his Grace and Love, or

2. That they were especially amongst men cared for, owned , valued and delightfully affected by them the Apostles, and their fellow-labourers : they being therein of the mind of God and Christ, to love and affect especially those who with special care and affection are embraced of Christ, and of God in and through him. *All men are to be honoured, but the Brotherhood in a special sense to be beloved, 1 Pet. 2. 17.* not only (though specially

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pecially also) with a love of Charity , but also with a love of *Brotherly kindness* , a love of *Brethren* , 1 Pet. 3. 9. Hebr. 13. 2 Pet. 1. 7. even as Christ preferred such before his natural Brethren, Mother, and Sisters, as such only , *Matth. 12. 48, 49, 50.* So did the Apostles and Servants of Christ prefer the hearty believers of the Doctrine of Christ before all other persons , and so demeaned themselves in word and deed towards them ; owning them as their Brethren and beloved ; carrying themselves to them as *Fathers* toward their children. 1 Cor. 4. 14, 15. 2 Cor. 12, 14. yea, as a *Tender Nurse* or *Foster-Mother* toward her little ones , as, *Theff. 2. 7, 8.* *They were gentle towards them as a Nurse that cherisheth her children, so kindly affectionate to them that they were willing to impart their lives and Souls to them.* And so they instructed the Elders and Ministers ordained by them to be especially careful of, and watchful over such. *Act. 20. 28.* 1 Pet. 5. 4 2, 3. and exhorted them to be *kindly affectioned one to another.* Rom. 12. 10. yea , and this from the difference between these and others. For,

Obfer. 2. As there is a great difference between hearty believers in Christ, and others that believe not , and much more those that are turned aside and endeavour to corrupt others from the faith of him ; so the Apostles used , and others that are the Servants and Ministers of Christ should use in their ministration to put a great difference between them also : for *The righteous is more excellent then his neighbour,* Prov. 12. 26. More excellent, both as to his root, which is Christ and God ✓

God in him, in whom he is by faith planted, and stands, and grows; and in respect of his branches, or what issues and springs up from the faith of Christ in his heart, as his thoughts and estimates of, and affections to God, his Truth, Wayes, People.

Though there may be much of the flesh cleaving to him in these, and rendring these so imperfect, that he hath no cause to boast of them in the presence of God, yet in these the righteous, believing person is far otherwise, and better than his Neighbour that is unrighteous, and hath nothing of the sap, virtue and Spirit of Christ in him. And then in his fruits and usefulness to others in word, and work, and for the glorifying of God to and amongst them, and shewing to them the way of righteousness, which being righteous, he doth also practice and exercise himself to: *His lips feed many, and his tongue is as choice silver*, Prov. 10. 20, 21. He is furnished for others good and helpfulness so as others are not; and his estate and condition is far more excellent; *Better a little that he hath, than the great riches of many wicked*, Psal. 37. 16. Yea, he is more noble and honourable in his birth and descent as righteous, as being a Son of God, John 1. 12. More rich, as being an Heir of God, and of the Kingdom that he hath promised to them that love him, Rom. 8. 17. James 2. 5. He is more safe and secure, as more out of the reach of danger, as being infolded in the everlasting Armes of God; and in all respects is furnished with, and interested in far more durable and excellent enjoyments than his Neighbour is, i. e. then any other

other man that is not righteous, or that is out of the Faith of Christ; and therefore much more than the wicked Apostates and Deceivers, that are *Trees twice dead and pluckt up by the roots*, as this Apostle saith, for they are corrupt, and their hearts wicked, and their works and fruits abominable and wretched; being fallen from God and his Truth, there is less hope of them than of any others; For better it is never to have known the way of truth, than after the knowledge of it to turn away again from the holy Commandment, 2 Pet. 2. 21. *Their root is rottenness, and their blossom goeth up as dust, because they have cast away the Law and Doctrine of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel, Isai. 5. 24.* Though they may profess that they know God, yet in deed they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobrates; bunglers at the best, and void of judgment, Tit. 1. 16. Now as there is such difference between them, so it is the part and practice of Christs Apostles and Servants to separate and put difference between them in their ministration, as Jude here doth, *To say to the Righteous, It shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings; and to pronounce wo to the wicked, for he shall (in going on to be so) surely dye, the reward of his hands shall be given him, Isai. 3. 10, 11.* and so to separate the precious from the vile, encouraging, confirming and strengthening the one in the Lord, and so in the way of righteousness, and reproving, discouraging and fighting against the other in the way of his wickedness; that he might be filled with shame, and either be turned from

From his wicked way, or be weakened and confounded however in it, that he may not be able to do hurt to others, and hinder them in the way of righteousness and salvation, *Jerem.* 15. 19.

But (as I said before) I shall not enlarge further upon these things, but proceed to consider the Council and Exhortation here given, for the direction and preservation of Believers. *But ye beloved, building up your selves on your most holy faith, &c.*

In speaking to and considering of which I shall, God willing, observe the order above propounded, first speak to the main thing directly exhorted to, and then to the means and manner thereto and thereof prescribed, as God shall afford his assistance and help to me: And so I shall consider,

1. The matter mainly or directly exhorted to, and see what it implies and signifies unto us, that is, *Keep your selves in the love of God*: In which is signified,

Obser. 3, 4. 1. That unfeigned Believers in Christ are in the love of God.

2. That it greatly behooves them, and it is required of them, that they keep themselves therein.

Indeed those words [*In the love of God*] may be so construed, as to signify either the way in which we are directed to keep our selves, namely, from the error of the wicked, and the dangers and woes attending it, and then the sense might be, *Keep your selves from those persons and evils*

fore-

forementioned, by taking heed to the love of God; or else (which I judge the righter, as to the intent of the Apostle here) the way, state or condition, in which the Believers at that present were, this, I say, I judge the righter: for the other sense representing those words (in the love of God) as if they signified (in minding the love of God) or the like, is included in the words, *Building up your selves on your most holy faith*, as we may see in considering that phrase; and therefore I conceive the Apostle would not speak the same thing twice in the same breath as it were; besides that, his sentence should be somewhat defective in omitting the word (minding) or the like; whereas in the other sense all things are plain. And the former Observation from these words evidently appears to be implied, namely, That *unfeigned Believers are in the love of God*; where we shall mind,

Obser. 3. *Unfeigned Believers are in the love of God*; where we shall mind,

1. What is meant by the love of God here, and then,
2. Shew that, and how, the Believer is in it.

1. By the love of God is sometime meant and signified his loving, merciful, pitiful and compassionate affection, in which he willeth and desireth the good of the party loved, and doth that that he sees needful and conducive thereto; yet so as not in the mean while liking or approving or taking into fellowship with himself the party loved, because of the unfitness and incapacity in the present condition for it. A Love of pity, commiseration and well-willing; but not of owning and delight

delight; and so it is said John 3. 16. *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* which is only meant of such a pitying and well-willing love, not of owning and approving love. For it is not said, That God so loved the world as that he approved its state and way, or owned it to be his peculiar people, his portion, and the heirs of his Kingdom, or admitted it into fellowship with himself. No, the world being there plainly persons not as yet believing in him, or in his Son, but in such a condition as needed his Sons being given to do that for it, and receive that power and fitness thereupon to help it as might render him an object to be believed in by it; were in such a sinful, wretched, ungodly State as in which it was liable to perish in its wickedness or sinfulness; and therefore God could not as in that state in which he is yet said so to love it, as to give his Son, approve of it, or admit it into his presence to the injoyment of fellowship with him, and life therein. And that is evident, for could God as then and in that state have delighted in, owned and approved of it, and so admitted it into fellowship with himself, and had God accordingly so have loved it as so to do, then was it in no danger of perishing, much less in no such danger as that it needed the coming forth and death and sacrifice of Christ to save it therefrom, unless we could imagine that God sent Christ only to preserve the world in his owning, approving love, and not to procure that it might be so loved, or have a way to be brought into it which is contrary to the Scripture, which both

tells

tell us that the world was in a state of enmity to God, and therefore not in an approved state ; and that Christ was sent forth for its reconciling to him, 2 Cor. 5. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, &c.* and every where implies a need for his doing so, that it or any man in it might come into such a state by him, as that it might be owned and accepted, which needed not if it was accepted before. For if it was owned of God and approved, notwithstanding the sin of *Adam* & that sinfulness which thereby entred upon it & defiled it, then why might it not still have been always accepted and approved whatever it might sin in, by the power or virtue of that its corrupted state, that its sinning notwithstanding : for if the root hindered it not of God's favour to it, why should any fruit springing from that root, and so Christ's coming had or should have been in vain or needless ; yea, and all calls to believe in him, and acting of faith toward him ; which so pulls up all the Gospel by the roots, and abrogates the Grace of God that it may by no means be endured. And therefore it may in no wise be understood of an approving, owning, and (as some are pleased to speak) a *tantamount* justifying love from eternity, but only (as we said) of a love of pity and well-willing, in which God beholding its wretchedness by reason of its sins against him, and his curse against it, did mercifully devise and find out a way to help it ; and where through any of it might (if not obstinately chusing their own ruine) be actually saved and brought to happiness. Such a love as this may be in a Father toward an ungracious childe who hath provoked him to cast him

into prison, where he yet remains in his crooked conditions and in danger there to perish; he may out of pity use means to set him free, and reclaim him to a better demeanour of himself, while yet he cannot like of his present either demeanour or condition, or own and delight in him as such. And as *David* loved *Absalom* greatly, even while he was in open arms and rebellion against him, so as that he was not willing he should perish or be slain therein; yea, so as he could have found in his heart to have died for him, so he might have lived and come to good; when as yet he could not own, approve, or delight in him, or like to have his company in that his condition. Such a love God loves sinners and ungodly men with, while yet they be such. But,

2. By the love of God is sometime meant and signified his owning, approving, tenderly affecting, & delightfully favouring or embracing a person or party loved, as when it is said, *The Father loveth the Son, and gave all things to him*, John 3. 36. and again, *Therefore my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again*, John 10. 17. that is, he owns, approves, and delights in the Son, as in *Matth. 3. 17. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased*, and as *Mat. 12. 18. Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my Soul is well-pleased*, or as *Isaiah* hath it, *Isa. 42. 1. in whom my soul delighteth*. He so loved & loveth Christ not only as his eternal word as brought forth before the mountains and hills, rejoicing always before him, and his daily delight, as *Pro. 8. 29. 30.* but also as man of the seed of *Abraham* and *David* after the flesh, and because he was obedient

bedient to him, did his will, and kept his Commandement in laying down his life a ran- some for us, and taking it again, as *John 15. 9 10.* with 10. 17, 18. that he hath in all cases stood by him, upheld. and helped him, owned and appro- ved his doings and performances, accepted him in- to his presence, given him honour and glory, and taken up his delight and well-pleasedness in him for ever. After that manner loved he not the world, he owned it not nor approves its works, nor takes it into his favour & acceptance, because it and its works are all evil. But with such a love God and Christ loved his Disciples, as in *John 15. 9, 10.* *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; (so that after such a sort with such an own- ing, accepting, approving love) continue ye in my love: and John 16. 27. The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* Surely, God loved them be- fore they loved Christ, but that was with a pitying, well-willing love, desiring their good, and afford- ing that to them that might conduce to their good, both as to the making them good, and bringing them to be capable subjects of his special good- ness, while they were yet of the world he loved them, as he loved the world, and with such a manner of loving them; and so gave Christ for them and to them as an object fit to be believed in by them, that they might believe in him, and be saved out of the condition of the world, in which he found them, and in which they lay be- fore their believing in him: but now there he speaks of an higher and other manner of love or streaming forth his love upon them, as persons in

Christ, loving him and believing him to be the Son of God sent forth into the world by him. Such a likement of them as a result of the greatness of his love to Christ, as not only on the account of Christ's intercession & praying for them (*I say not, says Christ that I wil pray for you*) but in approvement of their faith in and love to Christ, & out of his respect upon that account to them, he would hear and help them; yea, as our Saviour himself says in his prayer for them in the next Chapt. *John 17.23.* the Father loved them even as he loved Christ; for so are the words, *That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* Loved them, not the world, for he did not love the world as he loved Christ, though he so loved it, as to give Christ for it, to be the Sayiour of it; but by (them) its evident he means the Disciples and believers on Christ, who are said to be loved as Christ, not in immediateness, height of testimony, and fullness as Christ, but in respect of the account upon which he loves them. Not as *Adam*, or, as branches only of him, and so with a love issuing out of his love to him, as he may be said to have loved the world, that is, to have pityed them, and desired their good as his Creatures, but as Christ, as branches of him the true Vine, and with a love centered upon him, reflecting from his love to him, and with respect to him as loved for his obedience to him in laying down his life and taking it up again: and so as he loved Christ, even with a love answerable to, or after such a manner, as, his loving him, that is, reckoning them in and after him, approving; owning, taking pleasure in them, &c.

- 2. Now

2. Now the hearty believers on Christ, and retainers of his Truth, and walkers therein, may be truly said to be in the love of God in both these senses, significations or manners of the acting of the love of God; that is,

1. In the love of pity and well wishing, and that both

1. As they were in *Adam*, not only standing and as there owned and approved as his innocent Creatures (for of his loving men there we have nothing here to say, the object of his so loving men as such being long since ceased in *Adam's* sinning) but as fallen, and yet pittied of God, and not left destitute of his care of him to help and rescue him, for so they were parts and members of the World, or of that lump of mankind fallen in him whom he sent his Son for, and who stood in need of his Sons coming and saving of them. In that love (as we noted) in one sense all men are, till any of them slighting it, and rebelling against God, as exercising his love to them, are therefore *blotted out of the Book of Life*, and reprobated and reckoned after *Satan*, as incorporated into him, that is, all men, as fallen; were, and are, till then, the objects of that love: *God would not that any man should perish, but that all might come to repentance and be saved, 2 Pet. 3. 9. He would that all men be saved, and come to the knowledge (or acknowledgment) of the truth; for there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, a testimony in due time, 1 Tim. 2. 4. 5, 6.* Such Grace or Good will was in the heart of God toward the whole World, or every one

that there ~~through~~ Christ was sent forth for them, and ~~tasted death~~ for every one, Heb. 2. 9. by which (bearing upon himself the sin of the World therein) he took it away, *John* 1. 29. obtained such a release of that judgment that was upon all for one offence to condemnation, that there is justification to life, and righteousness in him for all; Rom. 3. 22. and 5. 18. He being risen again a Conquerour over sin and death for our justification, and being as a reward and recompence of his services and sufferings taken up to the right hand of God, He is by him made Lord and Christ, Phil. 2. 10, 11. Acts 2. 36. Lord of all, both of the dead and living, Acts 10. 36. Rom. 14. 9. And anointed and filled with the Holy Ghost and power, that he might be the light to lighten the Gentiles, and Gods salvation to the ends of the earth, *Isai.* 61. 1. and 42. 1, 7, 8. and 49. 8, 9. The great Prophet and Teacher of the Truth of God to men; the Great High Priest, who having offered up himself an acceptable Sacrifice to God, is in the vertues thereof the Mediator of God and men, the propitiation for the sins of the whole World, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. So as that mercy and goodness, patience and forbearance is by him extended from God to the whole World, in the day of his grace and patience to lead them to repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Psal.* 145. 8, 9, 10. and there is in and through him a way of access for any of them to God, and of acceptance with God in their repenting and coming to God by him, *Heb.* 7. 25. and 10. 19, 20. *John* 14. 6. and 3. 16, 17. Who is also the Great King over all the Earth, who are given him

for

for his inheritance and possession, Psal. 47. 7. Jer. 10. 7. Psal. 2. 8. And in the exercise of these his glorious Offices, *He is the Saviour of all men, and especially of them that believe*, and through him God his Father is so also, 1 Tim. 4. 10. *All things are ready in him for men, even a feast of fat things for all people*, Mat. 22. 4. Isai. 25. 6. And both he and the Father in him is ready to entertain thereto all that come to him in the strength and vertue of his grace and gracious call preventing them: which is therefore also extended to them generally by God and Christ in his works about them, or words to them, with his Spirit there through working to convince, reprove, and move them to seek after and turn to him, Isai. 55. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8: and 45. 22. Prov. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Psal. 50. 1, 2. Prov. 8. 1, 5. and 9. 1, 6. John 6. 37. Such love hath God to all generally, and to those that believe he testified the same to draw them to believe and come to him, they also being before their believing, *Children* (that is, fit for and worthy) *of wrath even as others*, Ephes. 2. 3. Tit. 3. 3, 4, 5. Yea, and now that they believe, having not wholly put off the fruits of the sin of the first *Adam*, but being as men still defiled with sin dwelling in them, and mortality and death upon them, as such, they are objects still of that love of pitty to mankind, and stand in need of the exercise of it to their salvation; they are not by believing passed out of that love, much less blotted out, but are yet continued in it, though also advanced higher, and so not only as all other men the objects of that love, but also

2. As brought unto Christ they are in a further sense in that love too, so as other men are not; that is to say, they are in the understanding, belief and knowledge of that love of God to man; that is, they in some measure understand, believe & know it, yea, have it in their hearts so as they are also begotten to God and Christ thereby, are born of it, and have the foundation, ground or beginning of their faith and hope in God in it; for it is in the discovery and perception of that love of God to man, that the heart is overcome and framed to trust in God, and brought out of it self, and out of its former false confidences into Christ; not the sight of special love to it self above others, but the sight and knowledge of Gods love to the World. Therefore when our Saviour had preached to *Nicodemus* the necessity of regeneration to the entering into the Kingdom of God; or seeing and injoying it, he did not afterward, for effecting that regeneration in him, tell him of some peculiar electing love of God towards him in particular, but of Gods love to the World in general, *John* 3. 3, 5, 15, 16. Even as it was not the lifting up the Brazen-Serpent in some special fashion for this or that particular person of the *Israelites* stung with the fiery Serpents, and their beholding it as in some such special fashion lifted up for them, by vertue whereof this or that person of them was healed, but by its being lifted up for all of them in general, this or that man beholding it as so lifted up as a common Medicine for their healing, received healing by it, and perished not. And as *Moses* lifted up that Serpent in the wilderness (the only common Medicine for all that were

were stung,) so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. So the Apostle Paul saith, Tit. 3. 3, 4. that it was the effect and product of the love and pity of God our Saviour towards man, and not as towards themselves only, or in some special manner, that they were pull'd out of the state of the world & saved. While any man knows or takes heed to, and minds the Name, fame, or Doctrine of God, that sets him forth in his greatness, power, love, mercy, faithfulness, &c. he will trust in him. That Name known and minded (though it be but one and the same in it self, for and to all men as considered alike) will beget and frame the hearts of such as know it to trust in him. It is the sight, understanding, or perception of the General love of and goodness of God to all, even to sinners and enemies, that overcomes any, whiles sinners and enemies to turn to God, trust and hope in him, and in his mercy for their salvation.

The sight and perception of the goodness of God to believers, as such may make a man to wish himself to be such, and more diligently to listen to what may make him such that he may partake of that choice goodness: and it is very useful also to be propounded in the hearing of others; as our Saviour did propound the blessed state of his Disciples to them in the hearing of the multitude, *Matth. 5. 1, 2.* with *Luk 6. 20, 21:* but it is the sight, knowledge, or perception of God's graciousness to sinners, in his (being upon the account of Christ and his sacrifice and mediation) ready and willing to accept any

any poor sinner turning to him, forgiving his sins (and not retaining his trespasses against him to barr him out from his favour) that draws and persuades a sinner and ungodly one to turn unto him, and hope and believe in him; yea, and it is *the flesh of Christ given for the life of the world*, that the believer also feeds on. Now all men are not in this sense in the General love, goodness, and graciousness of God: they do not see, perceive, and believe it, much less are their hearts taken with it, and living in it, sucking in vertue and power from it to trust in God, and to renew them into his image and unto his obedience. But the believers are in this sense in it too, in the words and Doctrine of Christ, *John 8. 31, 32.* feeding upon it, even upon the flesh of Christ given for the life of the world, *John 6. 51.* Christ given to be the ranfome for all, and there-through the Saviour of the world, is the root, spring, and foundation of their hope and faith towards God: and then,

2. They are also there-through in the special love of God. The love wherewith he loves Christ comes upon them, and they are in it, included in it, and inclosed with it; because through the discovery of Christ and the Grace of God in him, for all men they are brought into Christ. *Being baptized into him they have put him on*, as *Gal. 3. 26, 27.* and are lookt upon of God, as in him, as his Branches, *John 15. 1, 4, 5,* his Members, *Ephes. 5. 30.* and so they are reckoned after him, according to their new-Birth, of and into him. *2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.* *Being in Christ, they are no more known after the flesh:* After what they were

were in *Adam* and derived from him to be dis-
owned of God by reason thereof, but *they are new*
Creatures, old things are passed away, and all things
are become new, they are now in another, a new
State and condition, from what other men are in,
out of Christ, & that from what themselves were
in before they were in Christ, or believed in him,
they were amongst others in the state and fellow-
ship of the world, Branches of the same Wild-
Olive (as it were) with them, *ungodly sinners,*
children of wrath, such as deserved wrath and
were obnoxious to it, *as well as the rest*, but now,
through the blood of Christ, and by faith in him,
they are made partakers of Christ the second Adam,
the root of righteousness, the plant of renown,
the Son of God, and his dearly beloved One; and
so they are.

1. Justified & acquitted from all their former sins
and trespasses, none of them remain upon them as
imputed to them, there is not only righteousness
in Christ *for them, as for all*, Rom. 3. 22. but it is
also come upon them, so as they are in it. By Christ
all that believe are justified, acquitted, and set
free from the charge and imputation of, *all things,*
wherefrom they could not be justified by the Law of
Moses. Act. 13. 38, 39. even from such sins
as the Law of Moses provided, or allowed no
Sacrifices for, as Murther, Adultery, &c. what
ever they were before, they are now *justified, san-*
ctified, washed, or made clean therefrom in the
sight of God, *in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, and
by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. and they
are now reputed and reckoned righteous in Christ,
and

and so stiled, and spoken of by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures.

2. They are now also owned and accepted of God into a nearer relation and station to him; they are now in Christ become his, not only his in a common sense, as all the earth are, but his in a more special and peculiar sense, not only his, because his Creatures in *Adam*, and so he their Sovereign Lord to rule over and dispose of them as he pleases, but also his, because his new Creatures, *Created as his workmanship in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath ordained for them to walk in*: his people, his Subjects, his purchased ones; not only as generally ransomed from under the power and tyrannous jurisdiction of Sathan and Sentence of curse, to be under Christs Lordship, and dispose as all are: but also as through his love therein testified and made known they are purchased and procured to a voluntary subjection of themselves to his Government, to own him for their Lord, and themselves to be his Subjects and and Servants, and so are translated out of the Kingdom and jurisdiction of Sathan and the power of darkness, as to their living therein, and obeying thereof, *into the Kingdome and gracious Government of his Dear Son, Exod. 19. 5, 6. Eph. 2. 10. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Col. 1. 11, 12, 13.* Yea, they are made of his family and household in the choice sense: *Fellow Citizens with the Saints, of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God, &c.*

3. Yea, God so loves these that he adopts them to himself for Sons, being in Christ his Son, and, made members of him, whereas before were they others

others Servants, servants of sin and heirs of death. To them that received him, he (that is, Christ) gave this liberty, freedom or dignity, to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name; being begotten and born thereto, not of bloods, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God, whose work it is to bring a man to, and make him in Christ by and through the word of truth, declared to men, and listened to by them: *John* 1. 12, 13. *Jam.* 1. 18. thence, that also, ye are all the Sons of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, for as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, *Gal.* 3. 26, 27. It is a fruit and consequent of mens being in Christ; a priviledge resulting from Christ the Son of God by nature and generation that any obtain this Grace and favour to be reputed and owned of God as his Children; and therefore also it is common to all believers, that are truly such without difference or respect of persons: it is nothing that the carnal parentage or natural blood or birth of better or worse parents; or that the desires of the flesh to be honoured of God, or will of this or that man hath any thing to do in, or makes any difference in. All that are in Christ being born thereto, and therein of God, and reckoned after Christ, in whom they are, as *Gal.* 3. 28, 29. with *John* 1. 13. signifies: and then from and as a consequent to this,

4. God so loves them as to give them the Spirit of the Son, both his Spirit to open the knowledge of Christ his Son to them, and the disposition, liberty, boldness towards and affection to, and assistance in him, in some measure. The same Spi-

Spirit that dwelt in, and yet dwells in Christ, and led him as man in the dayes of his flesh, to have confidence in, and boldness towards his Father, and so to go to him upon all occasions as to his Father, he gives also to the believer in him, to let him know Gods Fatherly love to, and care of him, upon the account of Christ, and to lead him in hope and confidence to depend on and call upon him, as also to guide, instruct, comfort, strengthen and help him on all occasions. To this purpose is that in *Gal. 4. 5, 6.* *Because ye are Sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father; and so many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God, and the Spirit it self helps our infirmities, &c.* *Rom. 8. 15, 16, 26, 27.* and this he gives both as a pledge of his love and acceptance, and as an earnest of the Inheritance, *Ephes. 1. 13, 14. 2 Cor. 1. 22.*

5. Yea, and as he gives them the priviledge of Sons, and the Spirit of his Son, so also the respect of Sons; so as that as he heard and helped Christ his only begotten Son in the dayes of his flesh, in all that he called upon him for, and took care of him to provide for and protect him, so doth he also to those that believe in his Son; *The eyes of the Lord are open upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cryes, and his face is set against the wicked, that hate and oppress them, 1 Peter 3. 12, 13.* He is nigh unto his people in all that they call upon him; for as our Saviour also promises, *John 15. 7.* *Abide in me, and let my words abide in you, and ask what ye will it shall be given you; and that as a testimony of his great love to them,*

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in which he imbraceth them in Christ his beloved one, in whom they are accepted, *Ephes. 1. 16.* See also *John 14. 13, 14. Psal. 145. 17, 18, 19.* as our Saviour testifies, *John 16. 27.* saying, *In that day ye shall ask the Father in my Name,* (namely, when they had received the promise of the holy Spirit, to be a Spirit of grace and supplication in them) *and I do not say, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. Yea,*

6. In his love he teacheth them by his holy Spirit, and leads them into all truth as is good and needful for them, *John 14. 17, 26. Prov. 1. 23.* teacheth them how to walk, and how to pray, guides and leads them in the way that they should go, makes known his words, shews them his mind, the Myſteries of his Kingdom, &c. So *Psal. 25, 8, 9, 12, 14. Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners the way; the meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way,* i. e. those that being convinced of their own poverty and emptiness do meekly receive his words; *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant:* And *Matth. 13. 11. To you (sayes Christ to his Disciples) it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God; and I have called you not Servants, but Friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father have I made known to you.* He takes care of them that they may not wander out of the way of life and righteousness; yea, he shews them those delights and pleasures of his wayes, and gives them a glimpse too of the glory of the

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end of it, even of the glory of his Kingdom, so as that they are thereby made to love his way; and walk in it comfortably and with great delight, *Prov. 3. 17. Psal. 119 32, 165.*

7. In love also he nurtures them as his Children, giving them chastisement as he sees needful and good for them, not leaving them to their own counsels, wayes and wills, as he doth those that contemn his counsels, and submit not to him. He is faithfully reprovng and warning them, and timely chastening them with his afflictions, that he might teach them his Law, and they might keep his Statutes, *Psal. 94 12. and 119 67, 71. as a Father that loves his Child, and therefore spares not his Rod, Prov. 13. 24. for he knows that a Child left to himself comes to misery, and shame; nor yet doth he in afflicting smite them as he smites those that smite them, and are his and their enemies, but as a Father chastens the Son in whom he delighteth, Prov. 3. 11, 12. Isai. 27. 7, 8. that is he doth it in measure and judgment, not in fury, so as he sees they may bear, and as may be for their profit, Isai. 27. 8, 9. Heb. 12. 10. He is faithful and will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but with the temptation or tryal will give an issue that they may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10. 12. For he pities them as a Father pities his Child, knowing their mold and temper, and that they are but dust, and therefore doth not deal with them after their sins, nor reward them according to their iniquities, but punisheth them less than they deserve, is slow to wrath toward them, and abundant in goodness and truth, and doth not chide them alwayes, nor retain his anger for ever, *Psal.**

103. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. yea, and with his chastisements affords his supports and consolations to refresh their hearts, *Psal.* 94. 18 19 yea, and turns again and hath compassion according to the multitude of his tender mercies, *Lam.* 3. 32. Yea,

8. He takes pleasure in them, in them that fear him, and in them that hope in his mercy, *Psal.* 147. 11. The Lord takes pleasure in his people, *Psal.* 49. 4. It's his design and delight to make them happy, and to beautifie them with his Salvation, to make them as a Crown of Glory, and as a royal Diadem in his hand; therefore he calls them *Hephzibah*, that is, my delight or pleasure is in her, owning them together in Christ as his royal Spouse and Comfort; as *Isai.* 54 5. with 62 2, 3, 4. it rejoyceth his heart to see them thrive and prosper, for he hath pleasure in the prosperity of his Servants, *Psal.* 35. 27. Yea, and though they have their failings, weakneses and spots that might render them unlovely, yet having given Christ to them to be their covering, their righteousness and salvation, they being in him, he in him beholds them, and through and in him rejoices in his love toward them, yea, and will joy over or in behalf of them with singing, *Zeph.* 3. 17. though their goodness gives him not rest, yet his love to them doth, *He shall rest in his love*, and in his love also he hath abundantly provided for their perfect cleansing and conforming to him, that there may be no spot in them, but they may be perfect and without blame before him, *Ephes.* 5. 26, 27. having appointed his only Son (who is faithful to him in all things) to wash

and sanctifie them, and conform them to his mind.

9. Yea, such is his love that he deals with them further as his Children, in providing all things for them, and taking care to supply all their wants to them, and give them whatsoever he sees good for them through Jesus Christ, both for the things of this life, pertaining to their bodies, and in the things of eternal life pertaining to their souls; therefore also he would have them with carefulness, as knowing that he takes care for them, and as a Father knows and considers their needs, both for food, rayment and protection, and so for gifts or comforts, &c. *Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things*, Matth. 6. 32, 33. and without covetousness, as knowing and believing that he stands by them, is at hand to help them, and will never leave them nor forsake them; so that we may boldly say, *The Lord is on our side or is our helper, we will not fear what man can do unto us*, Heb. 13. 5, 6. *He is a Sun and Shield, and will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly with him*, Psal. 84. 11.

10. Further yet, *He causeth all things to work together for their good*, Rom. 8. 28. *All his wayes are mercy and truth to them that love him and keep his Covenants and Testimonies, and that think upon his Commandments to do them*, Psal. 25. 10. He is Lord of all things, and rules in the Hosts of Heaven and Kingdoms of men, and will and doth dispose of all Providences for the glory of his Son, and so for the profit and advantage of all that are in him, and do trust in and love him. To this purpose

purpose it is that he sayes to *Sion*, that he hath ingraven her upon the palmes of his hands, and that her walls are continually before him, as signifying, that in all his works he hath respect to their commodity and advantage, and his eyes are always watching for them, and spying out what may avail and profit them, *Isai. 49. 16.* and that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or world, or life, or death, things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods;* that Christ went away from his Disciples, it was because it was expedient for them, and that he takes away any outward comforts from us, and orders any afflictions to us, it is because he sees it good for us, if we believe and walk with him, *John 16. 7. Psal. 119. 71.* For

11. They being in Christ, they are his Elect in him, his Elect and chosen One, *Chosen in him before the foundations of the world, to be holy to him,* (his holy Lot, Portion, Inheritance, his Garden, Vineyard, &c. *Deut. 32. 9. Jer. 10. 16. Cant. 4. 12. and 8. 11.*) and to be blameless before him in love, *Ephes. 1. 4.* they are his, the people whom he hath fore-known in Christ, that is, fore-owned, or purposed to own in all Ages, and therefore also hath fore-ordained or predestinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son (in sufferings and obedience to him therein, and so in holiness and happiness) and therefore orders all things so as may conduce to bring them thereto. He hath fore-appointed them to sufferings, but only so as may conduce to bring them into conformity with Christ, to which therefore he calls them, and therein justifies,

fies, supports and owns them, and will in due time glorifie them, as he hath done to Christ, and to those in all Ages that have believed in and loved him; therefore they are pretious to him and honourable in his sight, *Isai. 43. 4.* after the pattern and similitude of Christ the First born amongst many Brethren, who is elect and pretious in the sight of God, however rejected and despised of men, *1 Pet. 2 4.* yea, and as he is the living Stone. so are they in him and through him; as he is the Priest, the high Priest of God, and his holy Foundation and Temple, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, *A Priest after the order of Melchisedek* (who was both King and Priest) so they also in him are built up a spiritual house, an holy, yea, a royal or Kingly Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices to God, acceptable to him by Jesus Christ, in whom all they are built up an holy Temple, an habitation for God by his Spirit, *1 Pet. 3 5 9.* *Ephes. 2. 20, 21.* Yea, and as God is delighted in Christ, and tender over him, so as who-soever is incensed against him shall be ashamed; and those that rise up against him he will destroy; so also they that believe in him are so dear to him, that *whose toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye*, and do provoke Gods sore wrath against them to their destruction, *Psal. 2. 3 4. 11, 12.* and *89. 21, 22, 23.* *Zeck. 2, 8.* *Isai. 43. 4.*

12. And to conclude, they are so in the love of God, and beloved of him, that he hath prepared for them, gives unto them, and will (if they abide) possess them of an everlasting and most glorious Kingdom and Inheritance. He gives himself

himself to *Abraham* and his Seed. (and such are all that are Christs, *Gal. 3. 29.*) to be their God, their *Shield*, and their exceeding great Reward, *Gen. 15. 1.* and *17. 1. 7.* as they are his portion, so he also is theirs, *Jer. 10. 16.* and all his infinite power, greatness, goodness, is for their defence and helpfulness in their obeying him. *2 Cor. 6. 17.* and he hath prepared a City for them, a City that hath foundations whereof he himself, in a peculiar sense, is the Builder and Maker, *Heb. 11. 10, 16.* Whence that of our Saviour, Fear not little Flock, it is my Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom, *Luke 12. 32.* And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, for my Father hath appointed unto me, &c. for if Sons, then Heirs, Heirs of Gods joys. Heirs with Christ, if we suffer with him, that we also may be glorified with him, *Rom. 8. 17.* the new and heavenly Jerusalem, and therein to eat of the Tree of Life, in the midst of the Paradise of God, and to drink of the River of the waters of Life, pure and unmixed pleasures, and to be free from all curse, sorrows, temptations, cryings, death, and to be filled and satisfied with all fulness of Good in the presence of God and of the Lamb for ever, see *Revel. 21.* and *22. 1, 5.* Yea. in a word, the love of God in Christ Jesus is unspeakable towards them, and passeth all understanding and conception: But I shall say no more here of it, but pass to the use of what is already said.

Use. This Truth thus opened and considered, may be of good use to us divers ways, as

1. To such as are yet unbelievers, and unacquainted with Christ, it serves to provoke them to give diligence to know and believe in him, to let go all their Idols, and lying refuges, their false hopes and confidences, that they are and shall be well enough, because of some good birth of good Parents, or priviledges, works, and worth of theirs, that they think well of themselves for: and all taking content in, or earnest pursuit after the injoyment of the world, and learn the knowledge of Christ, and close with, and submit to him that so they may be by him brought into the love and favour of God, as to the special actings of it towards them, that they would hear and mind the Gospel, and therein the love of God testified towards them, as and while yet sinners, in having no pleasure in or desire to their destruction, but providing in Christ for their escape from misery & obtaining mercy, to which also in his Gospel he is exhorting and inviting of them; that so through the knowledge and belief of his general love toward them and all men in the ransom given for them, they may be perswaded and overcome to believe in Christ, and in God through him, and submit themselves to his Heavenly Doctrine and Government; that so they may receive, the life in him the forgiveness of their sins, and the inheritance with those that are sanctified by faith in him. Who is also given for a Covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles, that he might be Gods salvation to the ends of the Earth. That so whosoever listens to, and obeys him

him might be by him made at one with God and be in Covenant with him. To every one while yet the day of Grace lasteth it affords motive and encouragement to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while nigh at hand ; to let go their evil ways , and false thoughts and imaginations (as of being well enough without the hearty knowledge of and faith in Christ, or as if they might not certainly obtain favour by closing with Christ or the like) and to turn to God, to hear & believe what he saith to them by Christ in the Gospel , and tells them there, that he hath done for them in and by him, that so they being in the mindfulness and belief of that his love and grace may be begotten therethrough to trust in him and depend on him , and so may find everlasting life. *Repent and believe the Gospel. Hear instruction, and refuse it not, for blessed is he that bears the instructions of Wisdom, watching at her gates, and waiting at the posts of her doors ; (using all he can appointed of God for seeking her) for they that find her (as all that heartily seek her attending to God in his ways shall) find life , and shall obtain favour of the Lord (namely, the choice mercy, and love of the Lord, which is the portion of the unfeigned believers, the inheritance of the Saints, and holy ones.) But who so sin against her, wrong their own Souls : all they that hate her and so slight and put away her instructions, and refuse to turn at her reproofs , love Death, Prov. 8. 32, 33, 34, 35. Isa. 55. 6, 7. Surely, the favour of God is worth the most earnest seeking after , for what like it can make us happy ? What else can so satisfy the Soul and*

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and make it safe ? If the light of the Kings countenance is so beneficial and comfortable that it's compared to a Cloud of the latter rain, sweetly refreshing and bringing forward the fruits of the earth, and if in his favour is life, as *Prov.* 16. 11, 12. Oh then, how much more advantageous and comfortable and enriching is the favour of God ! if he be for us, who is he that can be against us, or that can harm us, if he be our Shepherd, what good thing that he sees good for us can be wanting to us, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and the delight of whose countenance is better than light itself. Verily, in what he hath done for All men in the death and resurrection of Christ, he hath opened a way for us to look up to him, and hope in him, notwithstanding the guilt of that sin that excluded us from his presence, & the death, & curse thereby sentenc'd upon us. And in the glory given him at his right hand, the power and Lordship over all things in Heaven & Earth, and power to mediate for us, and obtain for us and ~~obtain to~~ give to us in the virtues of his Sacrifice the forgiveness of our sins ; yea, even of sins committed by us in our persons against his Grace and goodness upon our hearty Repentance and turning to him, there is great encouragement, to betake ourselves to his teaching and Government (especially considering his great mercifulness unto sinners, and promises to receive them that come to him, and faithfulness in his promises,) and to rely upon him for what ever may be for our welfare and happiness. Who so desires then to be in the love and favour of God, and to have him a sure defence and shelter from all evil and mischief and from

from everlasting destruction; yea, and a gracious Father to him, to take care of him and afford his blessing to him for here and for hereafter, let him let go all other ways of seeking rest or good to himself, and betake himself to Christ to learn and embrace his heavenly Doctrine and walk therein: So shall he be at peace with God, and good shall assuredly be his portion.

2. It is also very useful for reproof to those that slight the Doctrine of Christ, and take no heed thereto or rest in an empty formall profession thereof, not heartily embracing it and submitting themselves to it. Surely, it discovers them guilty of great folly and madness for what do they deprive themselves of? how inestimable a treasure? what unspeakable advantages and blessings? even of no less than the special favour and love of God, and so of his protection, promises, presence, and of eternal life, which stands in the knowledge and enjoyment of him and of the light of his countenance. And what is there that a man can set his heart upon and desire and endeavour after, that is worthy to be compared with so great benefits, much less to be preferred: are not all other things infinitely below the favour of God, either as to our safety or satisfaction? Can we be any where so safe as in his custody and protection? Or any where so well provided for as in his blessing? The life and happiness of the Soul stands in its having his love and favour towards it, and its enjoyment of his blessing: therefore without that the Soul is without life and happiness; and if that be lost the Soul is lost, and what is that in the world whereabout men busie themselves, so as therefore to neglect God and Christ

Christ and excuse themselves from their coming to and closing with, or living up to Christ and his Doctrine, that can give them any valuable compensation for the loss of the Soul, *Matth. 16. 26.* what a folly is it for a man to feed on husks or ashes, when he might have good and wholesome bread and other cheer to feed on: or what a madness for a man to take a deal of pains and cost to hew out a Cistern to keep him some water in for his use, which when it is hewed too will hold none because it is broken; when as he might take as much as he will and that exceeding good for any use for which he needs it, and at all times freely, without cost or expence at a spring or fountain that is so hard at hand to him: and yet such, or rather far worse is our folly and madness when neglecting Christ and turning our back upon him and his Doctrine, and refusing to walk in the faith and direction thereof, we yet multiply either works and services of our own or other mens invention or prescription for attaining righteousness and peace otherwise, or desire and endeavour after the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, or whatever we conceive may satisfie our lusts, seeking peace and rest and content in them. To such the Holy Ghost directs his Council with reproof after this wise, in *Isa. 55. 1.* *Ho every one that thirsteth (that lacketh & desireth peace, content and happines) Come ye to the waters (the Son of God and his Heavenly Doctrine, John 7. 37, 38.) yea; he that hath no money, come and buy, yea, buy wine and milk without money and without price (God requires nothing of gain, profit*

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fit or worth to be given to him by us as in exchange; but only let go and part with what we have that harms us, our evil thoughts and ways as, *ver. 7.*) *Why will ye lay out your money for that that is not bread, and your labour for that that satisfieth not? hearken unto me, and eat that that is good: that which Christ sets before us in his word and Doctrine, even himself, his flesh and blood, his abasement & sufferings for us as therein commended to our faith, and as the great evidences of God's graciousness to us, procurers of our happiness, and engagements to obedience) and let your Souls delight themselves in fatness.* See also reproofs of this nature in *Psal. 4. 2. Jer. 2. 13. John 5. 40. &c.* Yea, also,

3. Hence we might note the equitableness of Gods wrath against & judgments upon men that neglect to know and believe in Christ; that it is a just thing with God to separate them from his presence and blessing unto everlasting curse and misery, because they both slight and reject the good he hath done for them, and Grace shewed them in Christ: *trample him*, the great gift and evidence of good will, *under their feet*, and do set at naught his love and favour toward them; even himself in Christ, who would be their portion, & protection; matter not his promise, nor the sweetness, safety, & satisfaction that they might have, his presence and in the light of his countenance, preferring lying vanities before so great mercies as God tenders to them, *and despite that gracious Spirit that invites and allures them after him.* He that values not his favour how can he think himself injured if he feel his wrath? and he that regards not his presence

fence and blessing; but rather chuses to listen to and walk after Sathan; how can he complain of injustice, if he therefore *bid* him depart from him and his presence to be tormented and destroyed with Sathan: so that God *will be justified in his sayings*, and be found just in his judging them that despise and set light by him, and rebel against him. But,

4. It is also of great use to such as are in Christ, that have fled for refuge to him, embraced his Doctrine and yeilded up themselves to be Governed by him, it affords singular matter of use to them, and that,

1. By way of comfort and incouragement against all that doth exercise & afflict them; for what are all things that stand against them or are grievous to them in comparison of the love and favour of God towards them? *If God be for us*, if he love and favour us, if he accept and own us, if he be our friend and Father, and set himself to help us, ~~how~~ *who* or *what* are they that are against us. Is it the sins we have committed in times past, which we are turned to God from and have repented of; why, they are pardoned and forgiven through Jesus Christ believed in by us. For *to him give all the Prophets witness that through his Name whoever believe in him shall receive remission of their sins*, and by him all that believe are justified from ^{all iniquity from} which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Act. 10. 43. and 13. 38, 39. Is it sin yet remaining in us, and warring against us, and hindring us that we cannot serve God and live to him so as we would? Why, *There is now no condemnation to them are in Christ Jesus* (no not from the flesh or sins being in them to them) that do not walk

walk after the flesh but after the Spirit. If ~~we~~ walk in the light, as he (God) is in the light (is in his truth, affording his presence and strength unto us) then have we fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Rom. 8. 1. & John. 1. 7. And if God justifie (as he doth them that are his Elect) that is, those that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit, *Who then is he that condemneth? or who shall lay any thing to their charge?* Doth the Law of God find us in many things faulty and failing, so that according to its righteousness or rule for justifying (which is to justifie all those that continue in it in all things to do it, but otherwise upon any failing or sin to curse them, Gal. 3. 10. we are not able to stand in judgment but it condemns us?) Why, but *It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; and is on the right hand of God, & also maketh intercession for us, and if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnes.* Rom. 8. 33. 34. & John 1. 9. Doth the Devil rage against us, and roar upon us, tempting us and assaying by his fiery darts to destroy us? Why, he is a conquered enemy, and though he be for strength & eagernes to harm us as a roaring Lion going about daily seeking whom to devour, yet God who loves us is stronger than he, and none can pluck the sheep (or followers of Christ) out of his hand. Yea, Christ our Shepherd is the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah, and he hath spoiled Principallities and Powers, and triumphed over them openly in his Cross. He is stronger to defend

send us than Sathan to devour us ; and he was manifested on purpose to destroy his cursed works , 1 Pct. 5. 8. John 10. 29, 30. Col. 2. 14. 15. 1 John 3. 8. hold we fast by him and Sathan cannot harm us, however much he malice us, Christ both can and will surely defend and save us from his rage and malice. Doth the world frown upon us, hate, reproach , threaten and abuse us ? Be of good courage (faith our Lord) I have overcome the world ; and stronger is he that is in (or amongst) us, than he that is in the world , John 16. 33. 1. John 4. 4, 5. Nor can any hardship that may here befall us, tribulation, or distress, persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword cause God and Christ to cease to love us , Rom. 8. 35. He is a sheild and sure defence against all these enemies. His truth abides. that in us shall be shield and Buckler to us ; so that what is therein Earth or Hell that may discourage or affright us , Psal. 91. 3. He is such a place of defence to every one that uprightly cleaveth to him, that nothing can pierce through him to annoy or harm him, as in Isa. 33. 16. He shall dwell on high (so high as none can overtop him to storm him) his place of defence shall be the munition of Rocks (so that no undermining him or blowing him up) oh, but perhaps we may be starved or famished out for wants. No , not so for it follows, bread shall be given him , his waters shall not fail. Ah , but perhaps such a strong Castle and well victualled may be so close and scant of air or other delightful accommodations, as to force a man to yeild to get breath or air. No it follows, that there is both pleasant sight , & fair prospects to delight for v. 17. thine eyes shall behold

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the King in his beauty, and thou shalt see the Land that is very far off. So then neither need we fear evil will befall us to harm us; or that good will be wanting to us to supply and satisfie us. For if the Lord be our Shepherd how can we want any good thing? He is a Sun & shield and will give Grace & glory, and no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly with him, Psal. 84. 11. and 23. 1. He will supply our inward wants, Give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luk 11. 13. to lead them into his truth, fill them with hope and peace, and comfort them in all their troubles and afflictions; teach them also to pray; and therein (and otherwise) help their infirmities, subdue their corruptions, and sanctifie them throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit, &c. John 16. 13. Rom. 8. 26, 27. and 15. 13. 1 Thess. 5. 23, 24. And he will supply all our outward wants so far as is good and needful for us. Seeking first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, all those things shall be added to us. The Lyons shall lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord are sure to want no good thing, Matth. 6. 33. Psal. 34. 9, 10. He giveth food to them that fear him, he will ever be mindful of his Covenant, Psal. 111. 5. And he will every way do what is good for us till he have fitted us for, and bring us to the eternal inheritance. So that here we have everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace: 2 Thes. 2. 16.

2. It's useful also by way of instruction and exhortation to diverse duties that this great grace and love of God towards us, doth challenge of us, and afford good ground for as,

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1. To love him again that hath so loved us, and yet so loves us, as *Psal. 31. 23. Oh, Love the Lord ye his Saints, for he preserveth the faithful*: those that believe in him and are constant in cleaving to and serving him. It is but a meet return to him, love for love; *that we love him because he loved us first*, 1 John 4. 19. to delight our selves in him, whose delight is in his people, and accepts us in his Beloved One, and will give unto us in so doing the desire or satisfaction of our Souls, *Psal. 37. 4. we cannot set our loves and affections upon either a more deserving or a more lovely object. None there is to whom we are so much ingaged, or hath so much in it to content, satisfie and save us; we may be sure not to loose our loves by loving him, for he is not only infinitely before-hand with us, but also keeps mercy and Covenant for ever to them that love him, and keep his Commandments: we may loose our loves in loving any thing else besides him, but not in loving him.*

2. To hope and trust in him, for seeing he loves us so, who is so strong and mighty to save us, a *Great King above all Gods, in whose hands are all the corners of the Earth and the strength of the hills is his also. The Sea is his* (and so all troubles and afflictions) *and he hath made it, and his hands have prepared the dry land* (a stable port and safe haven of refuge) we may be confident that he will not suffer any harm to befall us if we stay upon him and his Grace to save us: yea, though he may correct and nurture us, yet he will take care of us to support and save us. *Oh, trust in him thou at all times, ye people, (especially ye his people*

and

and inheritance.) *pour out your hearts to him, he is a refuge for us, Psal. 62. 8. Yea, trust in him at all times, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, Isa. 26. 4. especially too seeing in his great love he hath made great and precious promises to us both for this life & the life that is to come, & hath confirmed them in the blood of the Lord Jesus his only begotten Son, and appointed him to be the Mediator of them for us, to take away the sin and unworthiness that might hinder us of them, and to obtain a dispensation of them to us. Surely we have in Christ great ground and cause of hoping and trusting in God, seeing God did therefore raise him from the dead and give him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God, 1 Pet. 1. 21. and seeing through him his favour doth compass about the righteous as a shield from what might harm them, Psalm. 5. 12. as it is also a Sun to give light and all refreshing influences to us, even Grace and Glory, and all good things to those that walk uprightly with him, Psal. 84. 11. whence also that Counsel, Philip. 4. 6, 7. In nothing be careful, but in all things make known your requests to God by prayer and supplications with thanksgiving, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

3. To rejoyce in God, and give thanks and praise unto him continually for his great love & favour to us; may they not well joy that are in so good a plight as to have so great a Friend, so mighty a Father and Saviour as God is? That have such a fountain to supply them with living water?

such a Castle and Fortrefſs to defend them? Yea, upon this account it is that it is ſaid, *Let them that love thy Name be joyful in thee: for thou Lord wilt bleſs the Righteous, with favour. wilt thou compaſs him as with a ſhield.* *Pſal. 5. 11, 12.* and that exhortation of the Apoſtle is to the ſame purpoſe, *1 Phil. 4. 4. Rejoyce in the Lord always and again, ſay, rejoyce: and ſo for thanksgiving they are put together, Pſal. 97. 11. Rejoyce in the Lord ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his excellenſs.* And ſo in *1 Theſſ. 5. 16, 17, 18. Rejoyce evermore, pray without ceaſing, in all things give thanks, for ſo is the will of God concerning you in Chriſt Jeſus. Joy in his love, and bleſs him for it.*

4. To moderation in griefs, fears, cares, and to contentation with what God gives us here, and ſubmiſſion to what he lays upon us. I put them together, for brevity ſake; his love to us might perſwade us alſo thereto. For as *Elkanah* ſaid to *Hanna*, too eagerly deſiring deſiring after, and too ſadly bearing the want of Children, *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons?* *1 Sam. 1. 8.* So may God ſay to his ſervants and people. *Am not I better to you than all thoſe things that you are ſo careful and ſollicitous about, ſo mournful after, or covetous for? Should they be covetous for the world that have God to enrich them? Is not God a portion ſufficient to content and ſatisfie our Souls? Should we be covetous of the honors, riches, pleaſures, injoyments of the world, if we have God at hand to give us better things than the world can? and who loving us will not with-*

withhold from us any thing that is good for us in the world; or delay us of any thing that he hath promised to us and is needful for us, beyond the due season wherein it may be best for us: to this purpose are those sayings, *Let your moderation be known to all men the Lord is at hand. In nothing be careful, &c. Philip. 4. 5. 6. And, Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things (either for maintenance or protection) as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is on my side. I will not fear what men can do unto me, Hebr. 13. 5, 6. As also the contrary to these sayings be reprobable hence; as upon this ground David reproves & checks his distrustful immoderately sorrowing thoughts, Psal. 42. 5. *Why art thou so cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me, hope still in God, &c.* So our Saviour upon like ground checks the fears and distrusts of his Disciples about food and rayment. *Mat. 6. 25, 26, 28, 30, 32. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or drink, or for your body, what ye shall put on. Consider the fowls, are ye not much better than they? Consider the Lillies, &c. If God so cloath the grass, will he not much more cloath you, being your Heavenly Father? O ye of little faith, &c.**

5. To obedience to God for his love and favour to them and to a chearful yielding up themselves to serve him with all their Talents and abilities received from him, as persons that owe themselves and utmost service to him, so *Rom. 12. 1. I beseech you Brethren, by the mercies of God (in which, namely, he hath given his Son for you,*

called you to his Son, and justifies and owns you in his Son, as the former Chapters had shewed) *Offer up your body a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* See the like *Rom. 6. 11, 12, &c. and 1 Cor. 6. 18, 19, 20.* Your bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price : therefore Glorifie God with your bodies, and with your Spirits which are God's, peculiarly owned and possessed by him ; as also in order to their retaining and abiding in the love of God and Christ towards them ; as in *John 15. 9. 10.* *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love. If ye keep my Commandments ye shall continue in my love, as I have kept my Fathers Commandments ; and continue in his love : which is another thing it instructs too, namely,*

6. To abide in Christ, and so keep our selves in the love of God, both in the views and enjoyments of it : seeing his love is so precious, enriching and every way advantageous to the Soul, & seeing it is the portion of the believers in and cleavers to Christ, it is folly to turn away from believing in and obeying Christ, to forfeit God's love and favour, and a point of greatest wisdom to abide in Christ, that we may abide also in the love of God, yea, and as that was one great engine and trick of the Devil and his messengers for drawing men out of Christ, or from the simplicity of him into some corruptions from the faith preached and urged by the true Apostles, to insinuate to them, that they were not in a justified estate with God, not owned, loved and approved of him, by their be-
lieving

lieving in Christ, but that to obtain that they
 must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses:
 or receive some Traditions and Commandments
 of men, worshipping of Angels, or the like: So it
 was the great motive and argument used by the
 true Apostles with them for preserving them in
 Christ, and perswading them to abide in him,
 name y, that *in him they were compleat*; were justi-
 fied, loved, known, and accepted of God, and
 had everlasting life: and that out of him, or in
 departing adulterously from him, in joyning some
 other ground of hope and trust *in him*, they de- with
 prived themselves thereof; as in Col. 2. 2, 3, 8,
 9, 10. Gal. 3. 7, 9, 29. with 4. 6, 7, 8, 9, 11,
 30. and 5. 2, 3, 4. Iohn 2. 24. and 5. 11, 12, 13.
*In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and
 knowledge; this I say, lest any man should beguile
 you with enticing words. And, Let no man spoil you
 with Philosophy & vain deceit for in Christ dwells all
 the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are
 compleat. They they that are of the faith are blessed
 with faithful Abraham. They that are baptized
 into Christ, have put on Christ, and are the Sons of
 God by faith in Jesus Christ, and so heirs according
 to promise, known of God, &c. But turning aside
 to the Law, to be, or seek to be justified thereby,
 they are abolished from Christ, and fallen from
 Grace; that is, from God's favour or favourable
 acceptation of them, &c. It behoves us therefore
 to continue in the faith of Christ, that we may a-
 abide in the love of God. Which leads to the next
 point, Keep your selves in the Love of God.*

Whence we may note further:

Obfer. 4. That it is the bufinefs of the greateft concernment to believers in Chrift to keep themselves and one another in the love of God, I fay, themselves and one another, for fo I look upon the force of the word [*your selves*] here; The Apofile fpeaks to them, as a Community, Body, or felect Society, whose priviledges and concernments are common, and by a common confent and joynt endeavour to be profecuted and purfued. Therefore as when any Message is fent to a Town or Corporation from a Prince or General to look to themselves, that their enemies break not in upon them; the Message concerns them in common, and it fuffices not that every man look to his own houfe or perfon, but that with one confent and joynt counfel and endeavour they each one feek the fafety of the whole Corporation or Town; fo it is the cafe here, Believers in Chrift are as the Body of Chrift; and as it is in the natural body, *if one member fuffer, all are grieved*, and if one be in danger, all endeavour the defence and fafety of it, and every member in its place endeavours, not only its own private and particular fafety and welfare, but the fafety and welfare of the whole body; fo is it or ought it to be amongst Believers. Every one is to take care of himfelf, and of the whole body or fociety, according to his capacity, *Looking diligently leaft any fail of the grace of God, or any be guilty of an evil heart of unbelief, or be hardened through the deceitfulnefs of fin*, Heb. 3. 12, 13. and 13. 15. efpecially thofe that are Guides to the

the rest, or are indued with greater understanding in the grace of God, or gifts for usefulness to others (as the eyes or hands in the natural body) are concerned to take heed to their brethren of less abilities.

And in such a sense, I say, to keep themselves in the love of God, is the business of greatest concernment to all unfeigned Believers. To that purpose we may observe, that as it was the great business, care and endeavour of the Apostles towards or with the World to preach Christ and the love of God in him to them, to draw and perswade them to accept thereof, and so to believe in Christ, that they might be in the love and favour of God, that they might obtain favour of the Lord, as *Pro. 8. 33, 34.* be justified and accepted of God, and adopted into the number of his Sons, and so that it might be well with them for ever; that they might be reconciled now and saved in in the great Judgment, &c. as *2 Cor. 5. 10, 11, 19, 20.* with *6. 1, 2 16, 17, 18. Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Aū. 13. 37, 38, 39, 40.* So with the Churches that had already through the Grace of God believed, and had obtained the mercy and favour of God in Christ (as these to whom this Apostle here wrote) their great business was, that they might be kept therein by abiding in the faith of Christ, and obedience to him: to which purpose is that of the Apostle *Col. 2. 1, 2, 3. &c. I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you, that your hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, to the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery both of God the Father, and of Christ, in whom (or in which mystery) are hid all the treasures*

fures of wisdom and knowledge. This I say, lest
 any man should beguile you with enticing words: and
 ver. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward
 through a voluntary humility in worshipping of An-
 gels, &c. and so to the Corinthians. I am jealous over
 you with a godly jealousy, lest as the Serpent beguiled
 Eve, your minds should by any means be corrupted
 from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus: and, Watch
 ye, stand ye fast in the faith, quit ye like men, and be
 strong, 2 Cor. 11. 3. & 1 Cor. 16. 13. to the same pur-
 pose is that in Gal. 5. 1. Stand fast in the liberty
 wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not en-
 tangled again in the yoke of bondage: for I Paul say
 unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall
 profit you nothing. So again, to the Corinthians, 1 Cor.
 10. 1, 12. I would not have you ignorant, that all
 our Fathers were under the Cloud, and all of them
 passed through the Sea, and were baptized unto Mo-
 ses in the cloud, and in the Sea, and did all eat the
 same spiritual meat, &c. but with many of them, God
 was not well pleased, &c. let him therefore that thinks he stands
 take heed lest he fall: and to the Romans, chap. 11.
 20, 22. Thou standest by faith, be not high minded,
 but fear. And to the Ephesians. Finally, my Bre-
 thren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his
 might. Put you on the whole Armour of God, that
 ye may be able to resist in the evil day, and having
 done all to stand, &c. Eph. 6. 10, 11, 12, &c. And
 so the Apostle John, in 1 John 2. 24, 25. Let that
 therefore that ye have heard from the beginning a-
 abide in you: if that which ye have heard from the
 beginning abide in you, ye shall continue in the Fa-
 ther and in the Son; and this is the promise, which
 he (God) hath promised us, even Eternal life: and
 ver.

ver. 28. And now, little Children, abide in him, that when he appears we may have boldness, and not be ashamed at his appearing; and so 2 John 8. Look to your selves that we loose not the things which we have wrought, &c. and Rev. 3. 11. Hold fast that which thou hast, let no man take away thy Crown. And indeed, what can be of greater concernment to the believer than this, to keep himself in that state of safety and happiness to which by the great sorrows and sufferings of Christ, and by his great goodness in bringing his salvation to him, and striving with him with much long suffering and forbearance he hath brought him? What can be of greater concernment to a man pursued by deadly enemies that hunt for his life, when he hath gotten into a strong hold that cannot be taken by any storm or assault, and that is every way well provided for, for his preservation and defence, than to keep himself therein, and not by any means to venture out of it, no not upon the fair pretences and flattering perswasions of pretended friends; lest he fall into the hands of his enemies. Such is the believers case here, seeing in the love and favour of God he is most safe and happy, but out of that nothing but misery is to be met with, it stands him in hand to keep himself well while he is so. Keep your selves in the Love of God.

But now in this Observation that follows fairly from the words as the main thing here directly exhorted to by the Apostle, there are divers things implied that we shall take distinct notice of, as to say:

1. That possibly believers may go out of, or from the love of God: they may not abide in it. Yea,

2. That

3. That there is no necessity that he must do so, he may keep himself therein : and then,

3. There is great danger if care be not taken of, and in turning out of it, or from it.

4. That it is expected from him, and in some sense lies upon him as his work, to keep themselves and each believer his Brother therein.

1. *Point.* 1. That such as do believe may possibly go out from the love of God. This will on every hand be granted, concerning such as are fained, false-hearted believers, counterfeit Christians, and hypocrites; if it might be granted, as it may not, that such are in the love of God, in that choice sense of the word (*Love*) here understood and meant; but indeed such, as and while such are not, nor can be in his love. He cannot own, justify, and approve of such, and therefore to say, such may fall from it is to speak absurdly and inconsistently with the Truth. They were not such that the Apostle here wrote to, but such as were *sanctified of God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called*; and therefore were wholly of another stamp from those hypocrites, false pretenders and Deceivers, of whom and of whose ways they were warned and admonished; and from all such as men commonly say, may fall from the Grace of God, which they must be in before they can fall from. These were beloved of God and his Apostles, and yet to such he writes, to keep themselves in the love of God; which would have been a needless labour for him to have taken in hand, a needless exhortation to be given them if they could not but be in it, could not turn aside from it, or go out of it. It is to be understood then of true and right believers, such as God doth own and approve that such may possibly go out of, or fall from the favour of God.

And that this is true also of such, as his anger or wrath is, or may be opposed to his love and favour; that they may so demean themselves, as instead of his approving them and their ways, he may reprove and fault them, and instead of smiling upon them, he may frown upon them, and chide them; yea, be very much displeased with, & smite them, it will easily be granted, too; seeing many instances thereof are found in the Scriptures. As that God was angry with *Moses*, *Aaron*, and *Miriam*, *David*, and *Solomon*, and other holy men; so as that he inflicted great punishments upon them, as appears in these Scriptures: *Numb.* 120. and 27. 14. *Deut.* 1. 37. and 3. 26. 2 *Sam.* 11. 27. and 12. 1, 9, 10. *Psal.* 32. 3 4 and 38. 3. 4. 1 *King.* 11. 9, &c. *Moses* and *Aaron* amongst his Priests, and *Samuel* amongst those that called upon his Name, they called upon the Lord, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar, they kept his Testimonies and the Ordinances he gave them; Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God, thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest Vengeance on their inventions. *Psal.* 99. 7. 8. Yea, how often doth the Scripture tell us of God's wrath and anger against his people, even his Zion and Israel, as *Psal.* 80. 4. Oh Lord, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure, &c. and *Psal.* 85. 5. Wilt thou draw out thine anger for ever, or be angry to all generations? So *Lam.* 3. 1. I am the man that have seen affliction by the rod of his anger, &c. Yea, the Fathers in the Wilderness whom God highly favoured, and brought in love and mercy

mercy out of Egypt, & were highly priviledged by him, yet how did they provoke him, to displeasure by their unbelief and murmurings, so as they most of them were destroyed in his judgments, and their carcases fell in the wilderness, and they are propounded as admonitions and warnings to us, even to such as were justified, sanctified, and washed from their sins in the Name of the Lord Jesus: Yea; the Apostle Paul himself looked upon their falls, and the disfavour that they procured to themselves as warnings to him. See 1 Cor. 9. 16, 24, 25, 26, 27. with chap. 10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and 6. 11. and from the consideration of what beset them, he lays down this general caution. *Wherefore be that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.* c. 10. 12. And if it were only possible for believers in this sense to go or fall out of God's love into his wrath and anger, considering the dreadfulness of his wrath and the sad consequents thereof upon the objects of it, that might be a sufficient motive to move us to take heed to our selves, that we sin not against him, but keep our selves in his love and favour; considering also on the other side how sweet and advantageous his Love is. But that seems not to be all, that believers may possibly fall into out of the love of God. Nay, indeed, love in a high sense may consist with anger, so far at least as still to own and acknowledge for his the person with whom he is angry; yea, and his in near relation too: though there be not an approving of the way and action that causeth the anger. As a man may be angry and greatly displeased with his Son or wife whom yet he doth not disinherit or cut off. So God is angry with his Children and people often, whom

yet he owns for his Children and people. So Psal. 78. 59, 60, 61, 62. *When God heard this (the the unfaithfulness and Idolatry of his people) he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel, so that he forsook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, the Tent which he placed amongst men, and delivered his strength into Captivity (that is the Ark) and his Glory into the enemies hands. He gave his people over also unto the sword, and was wroth with his inheritance, &c. they were still his people though given over to the sword, and his inheritance, though he was wroth with them.*

There is something worse than all this yet implied as possible, namely, an utter rejection & disowning, if men be not careful to keep themselves in his love, as is implied in Ezek. 33. 13. *When I say to a righteous man, thou shalt surely live, (note by the way, that God doth not say so to any seemingly, outwardly righteous man onely, that is not so indeed; he promises not life to the hypocrite or meer moral man, but only to those that are righteous in and through Christ) if he (that righteous man) trust to his own righteousness (to his being righteous) and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity which he hath committed, he shall surely die; whereas the life promised to the righteous is eternal life, and not this transitory life only which the wicked may enjoy, and often do as long or longer, and more prosperously than the righteous: so the death befalling the Apostate from his righteousness (which Apostacie also, its implied, befalls men as a fruit of their being lifted up by and trusting*

fling in their righteousness) is an answerable
 Death that is threatned to the wicked, and which
 he by turning from his wickednes may escape, v. 14
 which is eternal death. And lest any should say, this
 is but a supposition, and proves nothing: it is true,
 if that such a thing be, such a thing will follow;
 but when is that, or that cannot follow. It might
 be as rationally replied on the other hand that
 then it might be said to the next Verse, *When
 I say to the wicked thou shalt surely die, if he turn
 from his evill way he shall live,* that, that is but a sup-
 position too & so proves not that a wicked man may
 ever repent unto eternal life, which is manifestly
 false; and yet the former is as well supposed as
 this latter. But besides, Solomon tells us, that by the
 evil adulterous woman (whether literally or figu-
 ratively also taken for the false Church, or false
 worldly Spirit that lays in wait to deceive) *many
 have bin cast down wounded; yea, many strong men have
 been slain by her.* Whereby wounded and slain can-
 not rationally be understood a bodily and literal
 wounding and slaying, but that that is spiritual
 and of the Soul; and what can the slaying that
 mean but a quite bereaving it of some spiritual life;
 yea, of such spiritual life too, or degree, of spiri-
 tual life as made strong, and more firm and able
 therein those that it was in; as if he should say,
 many hath she cast down into sadness and distress
 of minde, or wounded in their Consciences by
 tampering with her; yea, many strong in the faith
 and power of God by listning to her enchantments
 and pleasing allurements, have been out-right slain
 wholly bereft of spiritual life by her, Prov.

7. 28. To which we may consider what the Apostle saith of the *Galathians*, both as to their receipt of the Grace of God, and as to their dangers (at least) they had then brought themselves into by listening to, and closing with the false Apostles. They were not only called into the Grace of Christ, but had also so received it, that they therethrough were made the Sons of God; and God had so owned them or known them, as to send into their hearts the Spirit of his Son, so as they did run well, Gal. 1. 6. and 3. 26. and 4. 5, 6, 9. & 5. 7. and yet Paul tells them he was afraid of them, Gal. 4. 11. but no ground for fear where there was no possibility of miscarrying, as there was not if that be true, that once a Son of God and ever so, and that it is impossible for a believer that is rightly so, & approved of God, to miscarry. Ah, but there might be danger of falling under anger (as before) but not of falling away wholly to destruction: to that let it be minded what the Apostle says in Chap. 5. 1. 2. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.* It was their not standing fast in that liberty without doubt that he was afraid of, and that they would again be entangled with the yoke of bondage, as appears by comparing it with chap. 4. 9, 10, 11. *How is it that ye turn again to the weak and beggarly rudiments or elements wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe dayes, and times, and moneths, and years, I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.* Now how far the evil of being entangled in the yoke of bon-

bondage, again might reach as to the damage they might sustain thereby; whether only (as some conceive) to the incurring some displeasure and anger, or else to the utter destruction of them for ever: the second verse of Chapter 5. with what follows, may shew, where the Apostle adds: *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testifie again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole Law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace.* What can be more full and significant, that they might possibly be drawn to circumcision, and to seek justification thereby, although formerly known of God the Apostles fears of them, and earnestness in arguing against their yeilding to it, clearly implies that he believed; for who will fear and be serious to endeavour to prevent what he believes cannot possibly happen? now that their being so led aside would not only ingage some wrath from God without impairing their state of Sonship with God, but would wholly exclude them from the favour of God and the fruits thereof, is clear, in that he says Christ would profit them nothing. Surely, if Christ did keep them notwithstanding their such falls, in the favour of God and from a possibility of falling finally, though they might suffer great testimonies of displeasure from God, he should then profit them very much, even as much as such a foundation would profit a house which notwithstanding its being shaken and shattered in the thatch and tiles by the winds, should preserve it from being blown down or overthrown. And who would

would say that in case the foundation should suffer the winds to impair the covering of the house, it should profit the house nothing, though it keep it from falling? Yea, the Apostle says further, they were or should be, in that case seared by him, abolished from Christ, as a house removed from its foundation, so should they be from Christ, they should be bound to keep the whole Law for righteousness, as much as if Christ had done nothing, at all for them; or else they must perish, they should have no help, nor benefit as to their Justification and Salvation by him, they were fallen from Grace, that is, from the favour of God. So that this clearly implies a great deal more damage by letting go the faith of Christ, a worse loss of Gods love, than only an incurring his anger for a time here; yea, and the same is implied in chap. 4. 11. in his saying, *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain*: no cause to fear that of any that were the Sons of God, and known of God, if that were true, that being once made Sons they must be ever so, and could by no means possibly be otherwise; for sure what ever displeasure and wrath they might incur by their turning to the Law, yet the Apostle should have an abundant fruit of his Ministry in them, in that thereby they were notwithstanding their fall and what wrath might follow upon it, yet in a safe state, the Sons of God, and sure in respect of their state, of eternal life. Sure that cannot be in vain the main desired end of which is obtained and accomplished. And that was the main desire of the Apostles for those they preached

to, that they might obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ, of which, if they that are once in the favour of God can never possibly fail, they must have been sure in the issue, whatever for a time might be acted by them, or come upon them.

Object. But it might be said, How can the love of God, wherewith he loves the Believer, then be said to be such as wherewith he loves Christ, seeing he loves him certainly with an unchangeable, eternal or everlasting love, even as in the nature of man, but this love toward Believers may cease to be toward them.

Ans. To this I say, God in Christ never fails or ceases to love him that believes on him, with an owning approving love, and so as to stand by and help him; but when any turns out from the faith, he ceaseth to be a Believer, and if God should still love him in that sense, then he should not love a Believer but a Runnagade and Apostate from the Faith. Let men then keep the Faith and cleave to Christ, and they shall be sure to find Gods love cleaving to them. The difference then between Gods loving Christ and loving the Believer is nothing, except as to priority and degree, which Christ is certainly always preferred in, because in all things he hath the preheminance; but there may be difference between Christ and other Believers, as to their abiding the subjects of Gods love personally considered; that is, there may be difference in their abiding in the Truth. Christ was loved of the
Father

Father alwayes, and ever shall be, because he alwayes abode in the Truth, and did the Fathers will, verily, had not Christ done so, as man, could he or should he have disobeyed his Fathers will, and not laid down his life at his appointing, the Father would not, nor could so have loved him; for *Therefore doth my Father love me*, saith he, *because I lay down my life that I should take it up again*, John 10. 17. which implyes, that his Father had not so loved him if he had not so done; for that cannot in any good sense be said to be done because of another thing, which had been equally done without that other thing alledged as its cause. Let the Believer then abide in his faith in Christ, as Christ abode in his obedience to his Father, and he shall abide as everlastingly in the love of the Father as Christ doth. There is no difference in the Fathers love, if there be none in the Believers faith and obedience from Christs, as to its point of continuance: To this purpose is that of our Saviour himself, *John 15. 9, 10. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love. If ye keep my Commandements ye shall continue in my love, as I have kept my Fathers Commandements and continue in his love.* Where Christs continuing in his Fathers love is made the consequent of his keeping his Fathers Commandements, and upon those terms also he assures his Disciples of a continuance in his love, which is also undivided from his Fathers love, the Father loving whomsoever the Son loves, and *contra*; therefore in 1 John 2. 24. they are joyntly mentioned, *Let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, and*

then ye shall continue in the Father and in the Son;
that is, in the love and favour of them both; so
also 2 John 9.

And this truth here implied and supposed,
viz. That the Believer may possibly not keep
himself in the love of God, or possibly may go or
turn out of it, so as to the depriving himself
thereof, may be looked upon both as one reason
or ground of the Apostles exhorting them to keep
themselves therein, and as one motive to incite
and provoke the Believer to care and diligence
thereabout; so as to make it his business of great-
est concernment or importance, were there no
possibility to fail or deprive himself thereof, it
were altogether needless for any to exhort him to
keep himself therein, or for him to regard such an
exhortation, or do any thing with an eye to such
a business; for what wise man will be solicitous
to avoid what he judges impossible to happen?
This then is a fundamental, suppose all couched
in all such cautions and exhortations, that those
that are in the love of God at present may pos-
sibly, if they keep not themselves therein, fall out
of it, that is to say, true and right Believers,
(therebeing no others in the love of God, in the
sense of it before spoken to and opened) may, if
not watchful, loose Gods favour towards them.
It were a senseless thing to think the Apostles
would counsel or perswade any to keep them-
selves in the love of God, that were never in it,
nor are at the present in it, and as senseless it is to
think that they writ to them to keep themselves
in the love of God, who they supposed cannot fall
out of it, only because some others fall out of it,
that

that were never in truth in it, as they that hold the contrary Assertion are often put upon it to say, while they seek to evade the force of these Scripture intimations. But again this saying implies,

Point 2. That there is or may be great danger of, and in turning out from the love of God : I say, danger of and in turning out.

1. That there is not only possibility of turning out from the love of God, but also great danger of it that such a thing may be. It is not only possible, but many do attempt and seek to reduce that possibility into act in the Believers, many that are potent and subtle in their attempts; so that unless Believers do use diligence and vigilance in standing upon their guard, and using the means of their preservation which God hath propounded to them, they may be soon turned aside : And then

2. There is great danger in turning aside; the danger that a person incurs in turning aside is wondrous great, or the evils and mischiefs that attend upon a mans so doing are very grievous.

Something we may note as to either of these, they being both of them intimately here signified. For

1. Though there were a possibility of losing the love and favour of God, yet if there were no great danger of it, no great likelihood by any means, there would be the less need of admonishing of it, or of taking heed to such admonitions,

when afforded. As it is possible for a man to
 poyson himself, or to cast himself down a steep
 place, it is possible for any sober man so to do, yet
 there is no great danger ordinarily of it, and
 therefore no great need to give serious cautions
 ordinarily to such men against it. But when
 there are persons that set themselves to poyson
 mens meats and drinks, that so while men think
 only to feed themselves with wholesome food,
 they might instead of wholesome meat take down
 poyson, then there may be greater need to ad-
 monish men to take heed what they eat or drink,
 and for men to be cautelous what they eat or
 drink, and from whom they receive their meat,
 because then there is not only possibility but
 danger of it too, it may too too easily happen else,
 that they poyson themselves, and so when of
 divers meats propounded to them, and lying in
 their way, divers of them are mixt with poyson.
 The like may be said when there are crafty and
 naughty persons, that set themselves on work to
 intoxicate men, and make them drunk at una-
 wares, and then to lead them amongst Rocks
 and Precipices, whence they may break their
 necks.

Now if it appears that there is danger of mens
 loosing or turning out from the love of God,
 unless they be careful to keep themselves in it,
 then it appears more dearly yet to be a principal
 business or work that men that are therein should
 bend themselves to, to keep themselves therein,
 otherwise not; they need not set themselves to
 keep themselves from those things which are
 barely possible, and of which, though they be
 careless,

careless, there is no great danger that they should befall them, or come to pass. I say, though they be careless, for indeed there is no danger of any Believers loosing or falling from the love of God, if he be diligent and careful to take heed to the means and way of safety, provided of God for his preservation therein. The danger asserted is only in case of carelessness or presumption, and so there is danger.

1. In respect of the many enemies that lye in wait to subvert and withdraw us from Christ. As,

First, Satan, who indeavours it what he can, and *Goes about as a roaring Lyon seeking whom he may devour.* And although he be a conquered enemy, and Christ that is with the Believer is stronger to preserve the Believer from his wiles and assaults, than he is to assault and hurt, and Christ also is as well faithful as able, yet his faithfulness is engaged for the helpfulness of the Believer, and for overcoming for him in the diligent use of the means, the Believers putting on and exercising himself in the armour of God, provided and afforded, of which if he be careless and neglective, and slothful in the use of means, and so grow from slothfulness to deep sleep (as *Slothfulness doth cast into a deep sleep*, Prov. 19. 15.) then is not Christ in point of faithfulness engaged to save him; but as the Apostle implies in *Ephes. 6. 13, 14. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9.* Satan may prevail upon the unsober, unwatchful, sleepy and unarmed Soul to overthrow and devour it.

And

And that the Soul may very possibly be-unsober, secure, careless or presumptuous, and so through slothfulness fall into a deep sleep of senselessness, either of the Grace and Goodness of God brought to it in Christ, and the excellent advantages thereby afforded for its attainment of happiness, or of the dangers that either others or it self is in, of being led away by the deceitfulness of sin, and so lye open to Satans malice and malicious enterprises; the many exhortations to watchfulness, and cautions against slothfulness and negligence propounded in the Scriptures to the Believers (as well as the experience of the sleepy decaying tempers that have oft befallen Believers) sufficiently testifie. See the exhortations and warnings in these Scriptures, *Matth.* 24. 42, 43, 44, &c. and 25. 13 and 26. 41. *Mark* 13. 33, 35, 36. 37. where it is said by our Saviour, that *what he there said was* both to the Disciples, who were generally real Believers, and to all besides, viz. *Watch*. So also in *Luke* 21. 34, 35, 36. *Ephes.* 6. 11, 12, 13, 14. *1 Cor.* 16. 13. *1 Pet.* 5. 8, 9. *Heb.* 3. 12, 13. and 6. 12. and 12. 15, 16. *Revel.* 3. 2, 3. and 16. 15. Instances of sore decayes by heedlessness, and thereby of great danger signified: See in *Revel.* 2. 4 & 5. and 3. 1, 2, 13, 14, 15, 16. and the reason of it is partly from other enemies: As

2. The flesh with its affections and lusts warring against the Soul, and lusting against the Spirit, that endeavours the good of the Soul, *1 Pet.* 2. 11. *Galat.* 5. 17, 18, 19. it lusts after ease and pleasures, riches, honours and the enjoyment of this present world, the love of which cannot consist

consist with the love of the Father, but will by degrees choak it and eat it out of the heart; *No man being able to serve two Masters, but that he must either love the one and hate the other, or lean to the one and forsake the other*; and that it is very possible and easie for a Believer to walk after and mind the flesh, as well as to mind and walk after the Spirit, or at least if not so easie to the conscience and renewed mind, yet easie enough in respect of the natural affections and desires, is sufficiently proved by every ones own experience, and by all those serious watch-words, counsels and provocations to watchfulness there against it, and to deny it and not walk after it, *Not to love the world and the things of it*; the many falls of the Servants of God, as *David, Peter, &c.* and re-proofs for their walking after it, seeking to make themselves friends of the world, &c. as partly appears in the Scriptures before quoted under the former Head, and further in these Scriptures, *Rom. 6. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, &c.* and *8. 12, 13, 14.* and *13. 12, 13, 14. Galat. 5. 13, 14, 25, 26. Ephes. 4. 17, 18, &c. 1 Cor. 5. and 6. and 10. and 11. 17, 18, 20, 21, 22. James 2. and 3. and 4. 4, 5, 6, &c. Revel. 2. 4, 5, &c.* to which also add,

3. The World, both in the seeming good and delirable injoyments of it, and in the persons of it, pretending piety, knowledge of God and friendship to Believers persons, as also the examples and customs of it, and of many Professors of the Gospel in it, prove oftentimes very great baits and inticements to ~~their~~ lusts, and put vigour and force into them, while wisely lookt upon and considered
by

by them with a carnal eye, as appears in *Prov.* 2. 12, 13, 15, 16. and 5. 3, 4. &c. and 6. 25, 26. and 7. 10, 11, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27. and 23. 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 31, &c. *Luk.* 8. 14. and 12. 15. and 21. 34. & *2 Cor.* 6. 14, 15, 16. *Jam.* 4. 4, 5. &c. and also in the threats and frowns of the great and mighty persons of it; the harsh and bitter afflictions and sufferings they are oft exposed to in and from it, which being viewed do affright and scare from the steadfastness of the faith and of the profession of it by believers, as it is intimated in *Thes.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Matth.* 13. 20, 21. *Heb.* 12. 2, 3, 4. and therefore in both these cases we are exhorted by our Saviour to *pluck out the right eye where it offendeth, and cast it from us.* least by gazing with a carnal judgment and mind upon the things that are seen, we should either for the love or fear of them neglect things unseen, that are objects of our faith only; as also thence *David* prays God to *turn away his eyes from beholding vanity and quicken him in his way*, *Psal.* 119. 36. But again besides there are also,

4. False Teachers or false Prophets that come in Sheeps-cloathing, in great shews and appearances of piety and holiness and wisdom, men oft-times that have the approbation and countenance of the world, and are of great learning as to the Learning of the the World; yea, and many that seem to be skilfull in Mysteries, and to have a kind of Spiritual force in their teaching, so as that the sheep, if not very wary and watchful may easily mistake them for true Shepherds or Teachers of the Truth. Yea, and these so earnest, fervent, & industrious oftentimes that they will deceive

deceive if possible the Elect, *Matth. 7: 15, 16. and 24. 24, 25.* where note that those words (*if possible*) for the words (*it were*) are not in the Greek Text, do not imply an absolute impossibility of their being deceived; but a greater difficulty, and therefore greater diligence used by the Deceivers to deceive them if possible; even as the same words (*if possible*) used in *Act. 20. 16. and Rom. 12. 16.* where it is said that the Apostle Paul hastened *if it were possible* for him to be at Jerusalem by the Feast of Pentecost: and exhorts us *if it be possible, so much as in us lies to have peace with all men,* do not argue an utter impossibility, of either of those things, but only some difficulty there may be, or were therein, and therefore greater earnestness used or required: such is the intimation of the phrase in that of *Matth. 24.* Indeed this may be implied, that they the Deceivers are so specious in their pretences, and so diligent and earnest in their endeavours, that it was onely because it was not possible for them to do it, that any of the Elect are not deceived by them, even such as are not deceived by them would have been deceived by them also had it been possible for them to have been deceived; and so it may signifie an impossibility of some being deceived, as indeed it is not possible for Sathan or any of his instruments to deceive those that are not only called and chosen, but also faithful, as in *Rev. 17. 14.* those do overcome all their enemies through the power of Christ with them, and cannot be overcome possibly by them; that is, such as faithfully cleave to Christ, and use the means, and walk in the wayes he hath appointed them to go in, and promised his presence and help-fulness

fulness to them in no possibility, much less danger where there is not a remiss negligence or carelesnes presumption in departing from him, or not using the weapons and ways of safety appointed to them. But otherwise they may possibly, and there is danger too, especially if after often warnings to awaken up to more faithfulness and watchfulness, yet men be slack therein. Now these false Teachers are manifold, nor may I speak of them^{all} in this place. For many deny or corrupt the Fundamental Truths of the Gospel or some one or more of them, as in denying the person of the Son of God, his Deity, or humanity, or the preciousness, and vertuousness of his death and sufferings to make atonement for our sins: or the extent of that atonement, or the Resurrection from the dead, and the last Judgment, or the personal and glorious appearance of Christ thereunto. Or else corrupt the Doctrine of Justification, and so the compleatness of the faith of Christ alone for justifying us in the sight of God; yea, or for making us wise to salvation, or for sanctification, or the like. Nay, I conceive those are not the least dangerous false Teachers that teach men to believe that every man ought to judge himself Elect, and then that none of the Elect, or real hearty believers that are once such, can possibly fall finally and totally away by any sinning from the Grace and favour of God; for this directly tendeth to open a gap for their boldly closing with and following after that temptation of Sathan: *If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the Temple; for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee,*
and

and they shall bear thee up in their hands that thou dash not thy foot against a stone: that is, however thou mayst precipitate thy self into any sin or danger of sinning, or neglect the means of preservation, yet thou canst not, being a Son of God, possibly hurt thy self thereby, at least not to destruction. And indeed he that well minds the Scriptures of the Prophets and Evangelists, may see that those were of the most dangerous sort of false Prophets amongst the people of *Israel*, and that one of their most dangerous errors and false Prophecies, whereby the people were born in hand and persuaded, that because they were the Children of the Patriarchs, the Children of *Abraham*, the Elect, chosen and beloved Nation, therefore they should have peace, and no dishonouring or destruction could befall them; yea, though they walked after their own imaginations or served *Baalim*; their apprehension and persuasion of their being in such a sure safe infallible state of Covenant, Grace, or favour with God, as that by no means they could be rejected or cast away, occasioned the fall, rejection, and destruction of multitudes of them. See *Deum* 29. 18, 19, 20. *Jer.* 7. 4, 5, 6. *Mic.* 10, 11, 12. and thence it is that the Apostle warning us Gentiles by their fall, tells us, that our standing is by faith, and wishes us not to be high minded, as if because made of the choice people of God, grafted in upon and the Root of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the Covenant made with them, through the faith of Christ, therefore we could not fall, nor might God harden, and reject us, but fear and take heed to continue in his goodness, or else we however grafted into the stock of *Israel* by Christ shall be cut off by him

him *who hardens whom he will*. Now that which makes *these* false Teachers (as all or most of the rest of them) so dangerous to the flock of God is their great pretences to, & appearances of piety, holines, orthodoxy, or right^{ness} judgment, or rather their boasts thereof, even as those false Prophets who w'd to cry *peace, peace* to the Jews, notwithstanding their great wickednes still'd themselves the Prophets of the Lord, reproached and persecuted those who were such indeed, because they prophesied otherwise than themselves, dealing faithfully with the people to warn them of sinning against God, and shew them the danger thereof, as mad-men and Deceivers, as may be seen in Jer. 18. 18. Come (say the false Prophets) let us devise *devises* against Jeremiah, for the Law shall not perish from the Priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the Prophet, &c. as if they were the men that were the true and right Priests, wise men and Prophets, and the Law, Wisdome, and word of God were intailed on them: and in Jer. 29. 26. we read that *Sbemajab the Nebelamite* writ to *Maasiab the Priest* and to all the Priests, that *God had made him Priest and them Officers in the house of the Lord*, for every man that is mad and maketh himself a Prophet, to put him in prison and in the stocks: and faults him for not reprov^{ing} Jeremiah who made himself a Prophet, as if Gods true Prophet had prophesied falsely to them, and had been a false Prophet and a Deceiver, because he foretold the length and continuance of their captivity beyond what they dreamed and bare the people in hand it would be; and as if they who were indeed false Prophets and Deceivers had been in the right; yea, *Sathan* is sometimes

sometimes so transformed into an Angel of light, and his Messengers into Ministers of Righteousness, and come with such deceivableness of unrighteousness, as renders it very difficult to discern them, and to avoid their snares and temptations; as also the sayings of the Scriptures, which have any appearance (as sometime they have) to countenance their mistakes, are so wrested and made use of by them, as they thereby indanger such, as have believed, to fall, and be perverted, and spoiled by them, in case they be not more earnest with God, and watchful over themselves and one another, in taking heed to the Gospel-doctrine for preservation, such be their enemies and their dangers from them: As also,

2. In respect of their own weakness and inability in themselves, to defend themselves from and against those enemies, whether those within them, or those without them, there being nothing in them, as of them, that can do any thing to purpose against them, *In them, that is, in their flesh, there dwelleth no good thing*; their natural or artificially acquired wisdom is far too short of the wisdom or subtlety of the Serpent that indeavours to delude them; yea, it is full of inclination to side and agree with him, by reason of the great blindness and depravedness of it that it hath derived from him; for *the wisdom of the flesh* is not only *foolishness to God*, but also *enmity against him*, 1 Cor. 3. 19. Rom. 8. 7. So that if the Believer (or he that hath believed) neglecting the testimony of Christ, the Word of God, the preaching of the Cross (which is the Power and

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Wisdom

Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.) and not taking heed or having recourse thereto, trust in his own wisdom and understanding, he will soon be over-reached and perverted, and often is by the subtlety of Satan overthrown; therefore the Wisdom of God, in Prov. 3. 5, 7. counsels her Children thus, *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. Be not wise in thine own eyes, fear the Lord and depart from evil: for as the Lord saith of some in Jer. 8. 9. when the Word of the Lord is rejected by men, what wisdom is there in them?* The like may be said of their own strength, power and ability, in their own resolutions, to withstand temptations and enemies, it is but weakness it self. Even the best and most unfeigned Belivers have no sufficiency of themselves, as of themselves, but all their sufficiency is of God, and without him and his help and strength, and so neglecting him and his counsels, and so going in their own strength, and without his, they can do nothing, as our Saviour saith to his Disciples, *Without me ye (even ye my Disciples, who are branches of me, yet without me, neglecting me, or not looking to and relying on me, and so taking me along with you) ye can do nothing,* John 15. 5, 6. Thence those counsels, to abide in Christ, in the same Chapter, and elsewhere, to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, to put on the whole armour of God, that so they may be able to withstand in the evil day or day of tryal, and having done all to stand, Ephes. 6. 10, 11, 12, 13. and in 2 Tim. 2. 1. *To be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus; as implying, that otherwise we have no power*

power or strength to withstand them, or to stand in the Grace and favour of God, and so to go through the various tryals that attend us in Gods way and service. Its only in Gods armour, strength and power that we may prevail, and not be overthrown or harmed by them. And indeed the want of strength proceeds from the want of wisdom, or the insufficiency in their strength is from the insufficiency in their own understandings; we have no power of our selves, because no wisdom that may give us power, for *it is the wise man that is strong, and the man of understanding that increaseth strength*, as Solomon tells us, Prov. 24. 5.

Now this weakness in the Believers understanding and strength, may be the reason why they are often in the Scripture called Children, and little Children, as in *John 13. 33. 1 John 2, 1, 18, 28*. For as Children, little Children, are weak in both those respects, so are Believers in themselves, yea, in their attainments from God and Christ, if they be relyed on, and he neglected; for though God hath given forth such an heavenly testimony as is *able to make wise the simple*, Psal. 19. 7. and hath given gifts to men, *some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Prophets, &c.* that we might not be as Children tossed to and fro, and carryed about with every blast and wind of Doctrine, Ephes. 4. 11. 14. And the Apostle would have the Believers not to be children in understanding, but men, 1 Cor. 14. 20. Yet the same Apostle both signifies, that in the state of this life, the growth and attainment of Believers, even the perfectest of them here, is as far below the state of absolute and

compleat perfection, which is the state of the life to come, as the state of a Child, a little Child, is short of the state of manhood, 1 Cor. 13. 11, 12, and also more frequently implies, that only in attending to, and relying on Christ, and taking heed to his testimony, we may be delivered from the imputation, inabillity and weakness of Children, in deriving wisdom and strength from him, and so in being supplied with his wisdom and strength by his Spirit, in the receipt of the gifts given, or Word and Testimony, as given forth by them; so that if we do in the conceit of our sufficiency in what we have in our selves, neglect dependance on and attendance to Christ, in and by the said gifts, or the testimony thereby given forth, it will fare with us, as it did with *Sampson*, when parting with his Locks, in which his strength lay, he became as weak, feeble and as unable to make resistance against the *Philistines*, his enemies, as other ordinary men; we shall be found to act like weak and simple Children, and be easily abused, circumvented and overthrown by our spiritual enemies, in their attempts upon us to that purpose; indeed as it is with Children that have wise and able Parents or Guardians, however weak they are of themselves, yet if they will not listen to their subtle enemies, in their crafty suggestions, but first advise with their said Parents and Guardians, that are wiser then they, or if they will not venture to come near them, but in their hands, they are, and may be safe enough, notwithstanding the strength or subtlety of those that would either cheat or hurt them; so it is here, the weakest Believer, calling upon

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God, and cleaving to the instruction and counsel of Christ and his Spirit, is safe enough, and shall be preserved from falling; but as the Child neglecting the Fathers hand and counsel may be undone, so is it here; whence Wisdom so frequently advises, *Hear O ye Children the instruction of a Father, and attend to know understanding, and keep my Commandment and live, and my Law as the apple of thine eye, and depart not from the words of my mouth,* and many the like, *Prov. 4. 1, 4, 5. 6. and 5. 1, 2, 6. and 7. 21.* Whence we may further note, that the Believers danger lies not simply, or so much in his own weakness, as in his being liable to think himself wise or strong, and so to be puffed up with pride, and so to trust to and in himself and his own righteousness (as in *Ezek. 33. 13.*) or beauty (as *Ezek. 16. 17.*) or that he is Christ, (as in *2 Cor. 10. 7.*) that he is rich and increased with goods, and needs nothing, and so grow luke-warm, and carelessly indifferent whether he look to Christ or not, yea, neglect to buy of him what is necessary for him, (as *Revel. 3. 14, 18.*) or say, he is now become a Lord himself, an owner of much in himself to live upon, and so matter not to come to Christ; like them in *Jeremiah 2. 3.* that said, *They were Lords, they would come no more at God.* This, this is that which mostly indangers those, especially that are more abundantly gifted, enlarged and exalted above others; even as the Child, that conceits itself strong while it is not, so venturing to go alone gets a fall, and many presuming on their own sufficiency of wit and parts to neglect their Fathers and Friends advice, are over reached by

subtler heads: Thence *Solomon* observes, that *there is more hope of a fool, than of one that's wise in his own conceit*, Prov. 26. 12. Peter conceiting himself strong enough to follow Christ whithersoever he was to go, and thereupon following him unwarrantably into the High Priests Hall, got afore fall in his denying him thrice: Yea, it is most probably, if not assuredly believed, that the fallen Angels fell through reflecting upon their own created excellencies, and lifting up themselves thereby above their places, and from that subjection to God, and dependance on him, in which he set them: but certain it is, that the Church of *Jerusalem* this way fell to play the harlot from him that had espoused her to himself, and provoked upon her self such judgments from him, as the Law and usage of the Countries allot to Harlots, Ezek. 16. so true it is that *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty mind before a fall*, Prov. 16. 18. Whence the Wiseman adds, that *it is better to be of an humble spirit with the lowly* (with those that stand below, that are mean in parts, gifts, esteem, and are content with their low conditions) *then to divide the spoils* (do great exploits, atchieve great victories and successes, and get the honour and respect of men for their gifts, graces, actings, &c.) *with the proud*, verse 19. Now that Believers also may possibly be puffed up with pride, not only the cautions given by *Moses* to *Israel*, Deut. 6. and 8. and his fore-prophecy of him, Deut. 32. 15. and the Apostles warning Believers to take heed of it, and *not be high-minded but fear*, Rom. 11. 22. and the Lords giving to *Paul* *a thorn in the flesh*,

a messenger of Satan to buffet him, to prevent it in him, 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9. but also the Instances above hinted in Jerem. 2. Ezek. 16. Revel. 3. do plainly evince it. Therefore *blessed is he that fears alwayes*, with a fear opposed to high-mindedness, Prov. 28. 13. and good to say with good Jehosaphat, *We know not what to do, O Lord, but our eyes are up to thee, for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us*, 2 Chron. 20. 12.

3. And then the holiness and severity of the Lord, *who resists the proud*, against those who neglect and withdraw from Christ, compleats the danger; for were our enemies never so many and mighty, and we never so weak, or through conceit and pride liable to fall, yet if God would alwayes forgive, and continue to own us, there were yet no danger; but the case is not so, but as in the Son of God is life, and as in abiding in him there is abiding and continuing favour from God unto everlasting happiness to be met with, out of that infinite respect that God shews to him (namely to Christ) and the delight he hath in him; so on the other side, out of the same respect to, and delight in him, he will be provoked to wrath (though slow to it) and give up men to their own lusts and delusions, for slighting and turning from him; and *there is no respect of persons with God. The just now shall live by faith: but if any man (or τὸν ὁμολογῶντα, as it is in the Greek) if he (the just man) draw back, my soul, sayes God, shall have no pleasure in him*, Heb. 10. 39. *If ye walk after the flesh* (says Paul, Rom. 8. 13.) *ye shall*

dye, but if by the Spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the body ye shall live. Thence the Apostle couples in himself, of whose right believing there can be no doubt, and sayes, *How can we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Heb. 2. 3. And if we sin wilfully after the knowledge of the truth received, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, &c. Heb. 10. 26, 27. And so generally the Gospel tells us as well of indignation and wrath towards men upon their departures from God, as of his special favour and grace in their cleaving to him. And as the Grace and Mercy of God is more abundant towards us under this clearest dispensation of the Gospel, by the personal appearance and ministration of Christ, than it was under the Law, so also the terrors of God and his wrath is answerable to the Rejectors of it, or Apostates from it; to that purpose is that in Heb. 10. 29. *If they that despised Moses Law dyed without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trod under foot the Son of God; and counted the blood, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace:* And that in Heb. 12. 15, 16, 17, 18. *Look diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Lest there be any fornicator or prophane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of bread sold his birth-right, for ye know, how that afterward when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* For ye are

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not come to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Sion, the City of the living God, &c. Where the graciousness of the Gospel dispensation now is made an Argument for expecting the greater terror against any of us, if we fail of Gods Grace, or withdraw from it. So also *Hebr. 2. 1, 2, 3.* whence also that warning, *Chap. 3. 12, 13.* Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing (or standing off) from the living-God, but exhort one another, and that from the consideration of Gods dealing with *Israel* of old: Which Instance of their revolting from God, losing his Grace and favour, and incurring his displeasure and wrath, is often mentioned in the Scripture by way of admonition to Believers now, as is to be seen in *Heb. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, &c.* and *4. 1, 11.* *1 Cor. 10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11.* *Jude 5.* and indeed it is very pregnant, for they were a people highly favoured above all the people on the earth, saved out of *Egypt* by a wonderful salvation, led through the Sea and preserved safely therein, and provided for abundantly of all necessities for their travel to *Canaan* and preservation therein in a most eminent and miraculous way and manner, no people more favoured than they, and yet with many of them God was so displeased (yea, with *Moses*, *Aaron* and many famous men of that Congregation) as that after all his goodness towards them, he suffered them not to enter into the Land of *Canaan*, and destroyed many of them in the Wilderness: few of them entered the Rest that he had promised to the Fathers, which was a type of Heaven, or of the heavenly Inheritance and Kingdom of our Lord Jesus. And indeed that consideration, that of
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six hundred thousand men that came out of the Land of *Egypt*, but two of them all (that were men of twenty years age or upward at their coming out of *Egypt*) entred into the Land of promise (their after sinnings in the wilderness, hardning their hearts in unbelief against God and rebelling against him, deprived all the rest :) this confidence alone, I say, of so many people so highly favoured of God going out from it, and by their sins loosing it; and so few retaining it and enduring to the inheritance, may represent it (were there nothing else in the Scriptures to ~~quint~~ it) as a matter of great danger, namely, that there is danger, great danger of loosing Gods favour if men be not careful to take heed to God's Counsels and directions for retaining in: and as there is great danger of it, so

2. Great danger in it; nay, indeed nothing but danger, evil and misery in loosing and not keeping our selves through Grace in God's love and favour: for, as *in his favour is life*, so in his anger and displeasure, especially when provoked so highly as to disown us, there is nothing else but misery and death; a giving up to wrath and judgment, or a making way for his wrath and judgment to fall upon us. For if the *wrath of a King be as the roaring of a Lyon*, or as the messengers of death, how much more the *wrath*, yea, the hatred of God, as he is said to *bate all the workers of iniquity*, as they must needs be that depart away from him after they have known him, or rather have been known by him, as the Apostle saith, *All they that are far from him*, saith David (*Psal. 73. 27.*) *shall perish*, even all that abide in their alienation and estrangement

estrangement from him, and never heartily close with and obey him. *Thou hast destroyed* (he adds) *all them that go a whoring from thee :* they that never come at him must necessarily perish, because there is life and salvation onely in him, and in the knowledge and injoyment of him, without which injoyment (and far off from it) they must needs be that are far from him : but as for them that go a whoring from him, they are also to be destroyed by him ; they not only deprive themselves of that safety that's onely in him, as the others do, but also do more directly and severely ingage him and his wrath against them, as doing him more disservice and dishonour, than those that never knew him, nor had any acquaintance with him ; even as a wife that plays the whore from a loving husband, doth not onely deprive her self of the maintenance and comfort she might have from and in him, as they do or did that would not accept him for their husband ; but as she doth more disgrace & wrong their husband than they, so she provokes such wrath from her husband against her, and such punishments in his wrath as he will not exercise towards and execute upon others. They that have known the way of truth, and escaped the pollutions in the World thereby and are afterward intangled and overcome again, and turn from the holy Commandment are in a worse case than they that never knew or believed the truth, as 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. in this case there is an, *How can we escape ? and of how much sorer punishment shall be counted worthy, &c.* as we have seen, Heb. 2. 3. and 10. 29. so that the danger here is very great.

1. Danger

1. Danger of being left and given up of God to walk after our own counsels, lusts and pleasures, as Israel were, *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. and the Gentiles, *Rom.* 1. 21, 22, 24, 28. to a reprobate and stupid mind void of judgment, sense or conscience, to serve vile affections, and do things most evil and inconvenient, adding iniquity to iniquity, so as not to enter into Gods righteousness, *Psal.* 69. 27.

2. Danger also of having stumbling blocks laid before them to occasion their falling, and being thereby broken so as to perish, as *Jer.* 6. 21. to have some such providences ordered of God as will either suit the corrupt desires of wandring rebellious sinners, and afford maintenance and encouragement to them in their sinful courses, as the prosperity of fools destroys them, *Prov.* 1. 32. or else occasion offence and stumbling at God, his words, people, ways, so as to turn wholly from those in *John* 6. 66. that took offence at Christs Doctrine and turned so away as to walk no more with him; and as Christ himself were in his meanness reproaches and sufferings to the rebellious Jews. *1 Cor.* 1. 22, 23. *Rom.* 8. 33.

3. Danger of being given up to Sathan and to strong delusions, hardning and intoxicating them in their sins, and entring in upon Soul or body, or both to hurry them to destruction, as beel Judas falling from Heaven and becoming a Devil? and as beel Ananias and Sapphira in part, *John* 13. 30. *Act.* 5. 3. and as is threatned in *2 Thes.* 2. 9, 10, 11, 12. That God will send strong delusions to them that obey not the truth (and they are said not to obey it, that abide not in the obedience of it. *Gal.* 3. 1. and 5. 10,) but have pleasure in

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unrighteousness, that so they might all be damned. The wrath of God being very sore and hot against the abusers of his Grace in Christ, that withhold it in unrighteousness, as Rom. 1. 18, and therefore there is,

4. Danger of not entring into God's rest, or coming into his righteousness, and so into eternal life; or the Kingdome of God, into which no unclean thing can enter, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Eph. 5. 3, 4, 5. thence those warnings to take heed lest we fail of the Grace of God, or of the rest, that yet remains for his people after the same example of unbelief, as befel the Israelites that sinned in the wilderness, Heb 4. 1. 11. Yea, in a word,

5. Danger of utter perdition and destruction from the presence of God, and from the injoyment of his Glory, and so of being cast out into everlasting misery and torment with the Devil and his angels, for so much is implied by the Apostle, in saying, *we are not of those that draw back to perdition, but of those that believe, &c.* where it is implied, that perdition and destruction is the dangerous consequence of mens drawing back from God: Oh unspeakable and unconceivable misery and danger?

And this consideration in both branches of it affords a second and third motive to quicken up the believer to diligence in taking heed to the Grace of God, and the instructions thereof, and so to keep himself in the love of God; seeing there is not only possibility, but some danger of falling from it, if he be careless therein, by reason of his many enemies, his own inability to deliver himself from them, and Gods severity against the abusers
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of his goodnes and neglectors of his Son and his salvation. And great danger; yea, unspeakable misery in falling therefrom, answerable to the greatness of the love abused and Grace slighted. Great need to give great diligence to avoid such dangers, yea, to do it with all our might & earnestness. To incourage in and unto which here is also further signified:

Point. 3. That there is no necessity that a Believer must fall of or fall out from the love of God. He may through the Grace of God preserve himself and be preserved therein as well as at first brought thereunto.

This is evident in that the Apostle exhorts them to keep themselves in the love of God. Sure as he would not exhort them to a work that could not be undone, or to endeavour for that that they must necessarily & inevitably have; so much less would he exhort them to a thing impossible, the love of God therefore may be kept or continued in, as also our Saviour both implies in so often exhorting Believers to *continue in his words*, and to *abide in him*, and let his words abide in them, John 8. 32. and 15. 4. 5. 6. 7. and more plainly asserts, that his sheep hear his voice; and he knows (that is, approves and owns them) and they follow him, and he gives unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, John 10. 27. 28. 29. and again, *As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love; If ye keep my Commandments ye shall continue in my love, as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and continue in his love*, Joh. 15. 9. 10.

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as to the same purpose is that in 1 *John* 2. 24, 25. *Let that therefore which you have heard from the beginning abide in you. If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall continue in the Father, and in the Son; - and this is the promise that he hath promised, even Eternal life.* So *Caleb* and *Josuah* kept in the favour of God all the way through the wilderness, and entred into the land of *Canaan*. So *Paul* fought the good fight of faith, kept the faith to the finishing of his course, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. And many other good men have through faith and patience inherited the promises, *Heb.* 6. 12. have lived and died in the faith, and so in the love and favour of God, and are at rest with Christ and God, otherwise men should be never the better but the worse rather for believing and coming to partake of the Grace of God. For, better never to know it at all, than to fall from it after the sweetness of it is once known and tasted. The sin being then the greater, and the misery incurred more dreadful and unbearable, as in 2 *Pet.* 2. 20, 21, 22.

But now this possibility of being kept in the love of God is not from any strength, wisdom or faithfulness in man, as of himself, no more than his being brought into the love of God was by his own fleshly wisdom or strength, but both the one and the other are by and of the Grace of God. Its true in both senses (both of saving at the first from the state of sin and death into the state of life and righteousness, by being brought into Christ, and of saving in continuance in the love of God, and being preserved from falling back again) By Grace ye are saved, *Ephes.* 2. 5. and ye

ye are saved by Grace through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God, verse 8. For in us, though Believers, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing; nor have we sufficiency in our selves, as of our selves, to think any thing, Rom. 7. 18. 2 Cor. 3. 5. We have before noted the inability in man, even in Believers, as men, and so in and of themselves (yea, or in their inherent graces received) to stand and maintain themselves against the power of their enemies, but only in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2. 1. In the Lord, and in the power of his might, in the whole armour of God, as Ephes. 6. 10, 11, 12. But such might, power and sufficiency there is in the Grace of God, afforded in and by Jesus Christ, such fullness in Christ himself, and in God in him, and such a presence and power of God and his holy Spirit, in and with his Doctrine and Gospel, and such Armour of Righteousness given the Believer in him, as that there through he may be kept in the love and favour of God, maugre all the power, malice and subtlety of the enemy, and notwithstanding that great weakness and inability to keep himself, or to vanquish the enemy that is in him self.

Thus the Apostle Paul confesses that he was not only furnished for and strengthened in his labours (*I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the Grace of God that was with me, and by the Grace of God I am that I am; and his Grace that was bestowed upon me was not in vain towards me.* 1 Cor. 15. 10.) but also when tempted and buffeted of Sathan and in danger to be harmed; he crying to Christ for help, Christ answered him

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that his Grace was sufficient for him, his favour relied upon and looked to, would afford all supplies for safety and satisfaction to him, for therein a man hath God and Christ with him and for him in whom there is all things that may preserve him. As,

1. Infinite power, able to subdue all things to the Believer that rise up against him, and to support him in & under the greatest tryals & troubles that may possibly befall him; for he is the Almighty God, all things are far inferior to him, *no work too hard or difficult for him*: He that made the Heavens and Earth by his Word, and upholds them by the Word of his power, what cannot he create and accomplish for the help and safety of his people that wait upon him? and what cannot he strengthen too by his glorious power to doe or undergoe in the way of salvation? there is nothing Almighty but he, neither sin, nor Sathan, nor world, nor any thing or creature, *All the Inhabitants of the earth are to him as the drop of a bucket, he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing, a small inconsiderable thing. If he then be for us, who is he that is against us? None is able to pluck (or by force or power to take) Christs sheep out of his hands. John 10. 27, 28, 29.* Because God that gave him them is greater than all, and none to be compared with him. If a man hearken to his voice, and then obtain his favour, he can soon subdue his enemies, Psal. 81. 13, 14. Philip. 3. 21. because he can subdue all things to himself by his mighty power; yea, the strongest and violentest corruptions. *He will subdue our iniquities*, says Micah, 7. 18, 19. He that made all things at the first is able to make the heart and Spirit

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new, and put his fear into it to keep a man from sinning against him, *Jer. 32. 41, 42. Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Greater is he that is in the believer (that is God and Christ by his Holy Spirit) than he that is in the world, 1 John 4. 4, 5. greater in power and might: as also,*

2. Greater is he in Authority than any of the enemies. He rules over all things. All power and Authority is his and of him, and all his Authority is in the hand of his Son our Saviour, so as he commands all Creatures at his pleasure to be for the furtherance of the safety of his servants that believe in him. He hath an innumerable number of Angels attending on him and ministering to him, which he sends forth for the help of those that are *Veirs of Salvation*. And these he makes to pitch their tents about them that fear him, *Psal. 34. 7. and to bear them up in their hands from harm, and all the Devils and evil men are under his controul, so that he can abate their rage, bridle their fury and malice, take them off from the assaults and enterprises against them, according to his pleasure; None can say unto him, what doth he. Yea, and,*

3. In him is infinite wisdom and understanding to see and foresee what may either hurt or help his servants, and to order all things for good to them. All fulness of Wisdom dwells in him for ever, *his understanding is boundless, Psal. 147. 5. He sees what is in the dark, all the subtlest contrivances of Sathan are manifest to him: and the light (to disperse and scatter all Clouds of error and deceit that might intangle our minds) dwells with him, Dan. 2. 22. so that he is every way able to keep him from falling, the Soul that looks to and be-*

believes in him, *Rom. 16. 25. Jude 24. able to build up the Soul and bring it to the inheritance of his everlasting Kingdom, Act. 20. 32.*

4. And as he is able in respect of his Authority, power, and infinite wisdom (which was able to find out a way to ransom us when lost, and therefore, surely is able to find out how to save us when found again & brought back to him) so he is so good gracious, and loving, especially to those that are the objects of his favour, the members of his Son, his Disciples and followers, that there is no Question to be made of his willingness and readiness to improve his Power; Authority, and Wisdom for their preservation in his favour: they that are upright with him and depend on him, shall experience his all-sufficiencie exercised for their safe keeping. As his love to mankind when yet sinners and lost (leading him to give his only begotten Son to be their Saviour, and to that purpose to deliver him up to Death for their offences, and make him the propitiation for their sins, and glorifie him to be Lord and Christ, to the end that men might believe in him, and believing in him, become the Objects of his favour and be saved by him) may assure us of his readiness to care for, and keep those that answer his end therein in believing on his Son; that having justified us by his blood, he will much more save us from wrath to come; and we being reconciled by his Sons Death, we shall much more be saved by his life, *Rom. 5. 9. 10. and having delivered him up for us all (for all men) he will also freely with him give us (us especially who have received him) all things that may*

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conduce to our salvation and happiness, Rom. 8. 32. So also he hath through his Son made and confirmed many precious promises of taking care of, keeping and saving those that trust in him: as that, *Surely, In blessing, I will bless thee* (said he to Abraham and his seed. *Those that be of the faith of Abraham are also blessed with him*, Gal. 3. 7. 8. 9.) Heb. 6. 13, 14, 15, &c. he hath said of Christ and his Seed, that he would establish them. *His Seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the days of Heaven*, Psal. 89. 29, 30, 36. and again, *I will be with thee, I will never leave nor forsake thee*, Deut. 31. 6. Josh. 1. 5. Heb. 13. 5, 6. again, *Thou art my Servant* (says he to Israel his people) *I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness*, Isa. 41. 9, 10. thence also it is said, *They that trust in the Lord are as mount Sion which cannot be removed but abideth for ever. As the mountains are about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people from henceforth and for ever*. Psal. 125. 1, 2. Yea, and these promises he hath made good to his people in all ages; they that trusted in him have found his goodness and faithfulness therein. Which leads us to another consideration, namely,

5. That he hath engaged his word and promise to his people to keep them and bless them; (yea, he hath confirm'd his promise too with his oath, as we might have added; *I have sworn by myself, saith God, Surely in blessing I will thee*, Heb. 6. 14. 15 with

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Gen. 22. 16, 17. as also in Psal. 89. 3, 4, 35, 36.) And he is faithful that hath promised, cannot, will not lye, nor alter the word that is gone out of his mouth. He is the faithful God that keepeth Covenant and Mercy. Deut. 7. 9. His Word and Oath are two things in which it is impossible for him to lye, Heb. 6. 17, 18. faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it; namely, will sanctifie the believer throughout, and see that his whole Spirit, Soul and Body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, says, 1 Thess. 5. 23, 24. To which purpose also,

6. He hath appointed his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ in the vertues of his most precious blood and sacrifice, and invested with the Authority, Power, and Glory of God, to be as the Saviour of all men; so especially, and after a special sort of them that believe, his Church, his Body, his Sheep, to be their Shepheard, husband, and head, to take care of them, feed them, guide, protect, and lead them, and to keep them in the fat and fruitfull pastures of Israel unto everlasting life. This is the will, saith he, of him that sent me, that he that seeth (beholdeth) the Son, and believeth on him should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day, John 6. 40. And again, I am the good Shepheard, and know (that is, take care of) my sheep, and am known (approved) of mine. My Sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, &c. John 10. 14, 27. the Shepheard and Bishop of our Souls, 1 Pet. 2. 25. To which purpose, that he might preserve those that follow him; he is both furnished,

1. As a Prophet, with Authority, power and Spirit to teach them and lead them safely in the way that they should go, to make known to them his mind and the will of his Father, and so to *Guide the meek in judgment, and to teach the meek his way*, yea, and to reveal by his Spirit the mysteries of his Kingdom, the secrets of the Lord, and feed them with the choice comforts and consolations, the *fresh and fat pastures of Israel*, to make them like, love and delight in the way he leads them in, and to shew them their wandrings, reprove them for them, and recover them from them.

2. As a Priest, to mediate with God for them by way of intercession in the vertues of his perfect propitiatory Sacrifice, thereby to obtain of God mercy to pass by and pardon their defects, weaknesses and wandrings, or in mercy and measure to judge and correct them for them, and so pass over them, and still bestow his grace and favour upon them, and continue it to them, in blessing them, and giving such further dispensations to them of his Spirit and spiritual blessings, as may be good for them, and further their salvation. And in respect of the perfection of his Sacrifice to God, and Priesthood before God, he is able to prevail with God for whatsoever he maketh request for to him; and being an everlasting and ever-living Priest, *after the order of Melchisedeck, he is able to save to the utmost* (from wrath and judgment, and in the grace and favour of God) *them that cometo God by him, because He* (He so high, and holy, and undefiled an one) *ever liveth to* make

make intercession for them, Rom. 8. 26, 27, 34. Heb. 7: 24, 25, 26, 27. And then also,

3. As King and Lord over all, he is able to protect, and hide them, and safely keep them from the power and malice of their enemies, controuling their enterprises, defeating their plots, and overthrowing their power, and confederacies, and turning them about as he pleases, sustaining and upholding all his Servants and followers under all their tryals and sufferings, and giving issues and deliverances to them out of them, as he sees good for them, so as that *no man can pluck them (or take them by force) out of his hands*, nor any sin of weakness and infirmity cause him to disown them.

And also as Christ, *who* is thus appointed and furnished to save them. So *

7. He is faithful and merciful, can pity and sympathize with them in their ignorances, tryals, sufferings and temptations, and knows how to succour them, having himself had experience of sufferings and temptations, and will faithfully discharge the trust committed to him of his Father, and the oversight he hath taken of them. *He is faithful in all things, as Moses was*, yea, and more because *Moses was but faithful as a Servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house or household*, Heb. 2. 17, 18. and 3. 1, 2, 5, 6. *He will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment (truth and righteousness) in the earth*, till he have accomplished the whole will of God committed to him. *He is the Author and Finisher of the Faith, his hands have laid the foundation, and his hands too*

shall finish the building, *Isai. 42. 1, 3, 4. and Zech. 4. 7, 9.*

So that all these put together make it appear, that the love and grace of God, or God and Christ in his favour and love to his people, is a strong and sure refuge for them, and defence to them, so that they may in betaking themselves to him, and abiding in their faith in him, be surely kept in his love, there is not only a possibility of it, but an assured certainty also, they may trust boldly in him at all times, and contentedly sit down and solace themselves in his shadow, and rejoyce in his love, and sing with chearfulness, *The Lord is our refuge and defence, a present help in time of trouble, therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Seas. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge, Psal. 46. 1, 2, 6.* Whence they be blessed that trust in him at all times, or exercise faith in and reliance on him, *their dwelling is on high* (so as no enemy can overtop or storm them, so as to get to them to harm or pull them out, except they were greater then God, and could overtop him, and be above him in strength and power) *their defence is the munition of rocks*, so that no undermining them, or digging through their defence by policy or industry, unless they could outvye God in wisdom and strength, and pluck away his everlasting armes from about them, and strike through his sides as it were to pierce them) *bread shall be given them, and their waters shall not fail*, (so as there can be no starving of them out. Other strong Holds may be either storm'd, or undermined, or battered

battered down, or else they that be in them may for want of provision of bread and drink be forced to yield themselves to their enemies; but God in Christ is such a strong Hold, his Name such a strong Tower of defence, as the enemy can do none of those things to them that are in him. He is a very Fountain of provisions for them, the *Fountain of living waters*, of most quickening comforts and consolations, and there is plenty of bread with him, even of whatever may support and strengthen the heart to cleave to him, and resist the Adversary that sets himself against him: Yea, and whereas other strong Holds, in case they had all those beforementioned properties, strength, height and provision of victuals, yet possibly, through the closeness and unhealthiness of them, for want of air or prospect, might be very uncouth, and as close prisons to those that should abide long in them; neither is there that convenience here, for it follows) *thine eyes shall behold the King in his beauty, and thou shalt behold the Land that is very far off*, *Isai. 33. 16, 17.* Thou shalt have the sight of the beauty and excellency of Christ the King of Glory, to refresh thee. He will manifest himself to thee, *John 14. 21.* and thou shalt see the things that are to come, something of the Glory to be revealed, as *Moses* had respect to, and therefore a view in some measure of the recompence of reward, *Heb. 11. 26.* So that God and Christ is every way a place of marvellous safety to the believing Soul; so as it may well be said, as in *Deut. 33. 26, 27, 29.* *There is none like to the God of Jesurun, who rideth upon the Heaven for thy help, and in his excellency on the Sky. The eternal*
 God

God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting
 armes, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before
 thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Happy art thou,
 O Israel! who is like to thee! a people saved by the
 Lord! &c. But again,

8. Whereas the enemy being subtle, uses many
 stratagems to draw us out from our strong Hold,
 either by withdrawing our minds from God, or
 assaulting our confidence in God, or the like, and
 God requires of us in keeping to it to make re-
 sistance against him; that we might not be as na-
 ked men against him, he hath provided for us, and
 gives us in the Doctrine of Christ, and so in and
 through Christ, as set forth therein, *Armour of*
righteousness for our defence, both on the right hand,
 against spiritual deceits and allurements of the
 world or flesh, and on the left, against grosser de-
 ceits, or affrightments and fears proceeding from
 Satan and the World; which we taking to our
 selves, putting them on, and making resistance in
 them, will be able every way to secure us against
 all such assaults. *His Gospel-Doctrine is the*
power of God to salvation, (preservation and
 safety) to every one that believes, Rom. I. 16. be-
 cause that presents such evidences of God and
 his Righteousness, such strong ingagements, mo-
 tives and arguments for cleaving to Christ, and
 such a presence of the Spirit of God breaths
 therein, as that they that be not careless in attend-
 ing thereto shall be thereby strengthened and for-
 tified against all insinuations and suggestions of
 the Adversaries; there are such discoveries of
 the excellency and compleatness of Christ, such
 evidences of the vanity and emptiness of all things
 be-

besides, whether of the flesh and fleshly privileges, wisdom, righteousness; or of the worldly advantages, profers, enjoyments; such strong engagements from the mercy and love of God in Christ towards us, such profit and benefit to be met with by us, in cleaving to him; and such and so great terrors of the Lord against the rejectors of, and Apostates from his government, over them, and Grace brought unto them, as being minded and taken heed to, will abundantly provoke them to cleave unto the Lord, and resist those temptations and suggestions that intice them from him.

They have 1. The truth as a girdle to bound up their minds unto God and his ways, unto Christ and the Grace in him, and keep them from scattering them to vanities, and so to strengthen the Soul to walk with resolution and courage in the ways of Gods Commandments, and to stand it out against the enemies, yea, to bind and fasten all other parts of the spiritual armour about them, so as to be therein fenced against all assaults of the Adversaries.

The Truth of God and Christ, both as to his declarations of his mind in the Word, and the Word of Truth it self, which is the Truth, and as to his faithfulness in performing all his great and gracious Promises, so as that the mind being girded up herewith, the Soul will be able to run with patience the race set before it, and perform the service of God with freedom and chearfulness.

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They have 2. *The righteousness of God* declared in his Word, even the Righteousness which is of Faith (Gods gracious pardoning their sins, and accepting and justifying their persons in and through Christ and his righteousness, in forgiving sins upon their confessing them, and turning from them to him, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness) to be as a *breast-plate* to them to defend their hearts from fainting, or being pierced into with desperate grief and sorrow, by reason of the consideration of their sin and sinfulness, and of the iniquities of all their services and holy things.

They have 3. *The preparation of the Gospel of peace*, or the alacrity and cheerfulness that it puts into their hearts, while it speaks peace to them from God and with God, and sets before them an abundant provision for their helpfulness and satisfaction in all things, made ready for them, and Gods gracious readiness in all things to do them good; to be as *shoes* upon their feet, to fortifie their affections, and keep them from being either dirtied with these lower objects (and so also to keep their wayes and walkings from being soiled and polluted) or offended and turned aside by any of the hard things, the stones or rocks of offence that they may meet with in their way, but that they may go on both clean and safe, and walk, yea, run through all difficulties with patience and cheerfulness the way of Gods Commandments.

They have also 4. *The Shield of Faith*; the Faith as a Shield, or rather God and Christ as therein declared and set forth as an object of Faith

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Faith to be believed in and trusted to ; as a Shield to compass them about and defend their whole man, running into the faith of him, and so unto and into him as it were by faith, and so by faith opposing him, and what is in him against the fiery darts and assaults of Satan; which he will be casting at them, to pierce, wound or destroy them. He will be as a Shield to them, such as shall slave off and quench them, so as none of them shall be able to pierce through to them to poyson or to wound them.

They have as 5. An Helmet on their heads (to keep them from being beaten down by the force of any blows given them, either from Satan, as an enemy, suggesting fears to them, even from their Fathers righteously judging them, or on other accounts, or from the world persecuting them) the assured hope of Gods salvation, or the salvation of God, Gods sure protection and defence of them here, and his bringing or delivering them out in his due time, as set before them by way of promise in the Gospel, and so an object and matter of hope to be looked for by them. And then,

They have 6. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, as a two-edged Weapon fit and forcible to do them service, both by way of defence to themselves, and by way of offence to their enemies. so as that thereby they may both be preserved from the lyes of Satan and his Instruments; and from all his lying and wicked suggestions, and they may beat them away and drive them from them, yea, and cause the enemies of Christ and of their faith, by their powerful convincements thereof

thereof to fall before them; so Christ kept himself from the wicked one, that he touched him not by any of his temptations, *Matth. 4.* and so both he and his Servants have confounded their Adversaries, and convinced and converted many of them.

And then lastly, They have free access to God through Jesus Christ by *Prayer and supplication*, to make known their needs and requests to him, either for supplies and help to themselves and one another, or for rebuking, taking off, or weakening their Adversaries and Exercises. And they have through Christ the *Spirit of grace and supplication*, to instruct and help them to pray, and direct their desires and petitions for them; and Christ himself with God as their Mediator, High-Priest and Advocate, to make their Prayers acceptable to God; and this is a marvellous, powerful and effectual Weapon being filled with Faith, to obtain any thing from Heaven needful for their defence and safety, and to batter down the Forts and Strengths of their Adversaries, by pulling down judgments from Heaven upon them.

This is as the Christians Bullets of Ordnance, that he storms Heaven by, as it were, and takes it by force, and that being shot up towards Heaven from a fervent faithful heart, falls down again upon the wicked Adversaries, and doth great execution and slaughter upon them: so we may see how the *Prayers of the Saints*, being offered up by the Angel, who had many sweet odours to make them acceptable (*Revel. 8. 3, 4, 5.*) procured fire to be cast upon the earth, with voyces, thundrings, lightnings;

lightnings, and a great earthquake, whereby the judgments of God upon the Adversaries were implied and signified.

Now all these things being considered, it will evidently appear, that it is very possible for the Believer to be kept in the love of God, nay, that it is certain he shall be so if he be not greatly neglective of the means of his safety and preservation, so many and so effectual for that purpose; yea, indeed a man might marvel, these things for the Believers defence being well weighed, how it should possibly be, that he should fall of the Grace of God, fall out of his love and favour, and perish from his presence by any means; but that we have seen the possibility and danger too thereof before asserted, which also may further (as to the reason of it) be made manifest in the next consideration, wherein it is further noted as implied, that he being so strongly and well fortified and furnished for his safe keeping in the love of God.

Point 4. It is expected from him, and in some sense lyes upon him, as his work, to keep himself, and each Believer to keep his Brother therein.

Though as he did not bring himself into Christ, and so into the love and favour of God by his wisdom, will, power or goodness, but he was *called into him, and made in him of God*; so neither is it his work in his own power, wisdom and strength to keep himself there, or defend himself from what would intice him or force him out:

Yet

Yet as it was his act in and by the Grace of God in Christ, to believe and come to Christ, and so into the love and favour of God : So it is his act also, subordinately in and by the same Grace to keep himself in Christ, and so in the love of God ; whence our Saviour so often requires it of his Disciples. *Abide in me, and let my words abide in you; & continue ye in my love,* Joh. 15. 4. 9. *Hold fast what thou hast, let no man take away thy Crown,* Rev. 3. 11. with which agrees many passages of the Apostles, to stand fast, quit themselves like men ; let that they have received, abide ; abide in Christ, and the like ; as also that assertion in 1 John 5. 18. *He that is born of God keepeth himself that the wicked one toucheth him not.* In which keeping a mans self in the love of God is signified as to the act of it.

1. That the Believer be and abide in that state and way he is already in through the Grace of God, not departing, voluntarily leaving or going out therefrom, keep himself well while he is well, being content with Christ, confident and well assured of his well doing and happiness in so continuing : to that purpose are those phrases, of *abiding, continuing, not departing or withdrawing from the living God,* as in *John* 8. 32. and 15. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Col.* 1. 23. *1 John* 2. 24, 28. *Heb.* 3. 12. and 10. 35, 38, 39. as implying, that no man heartily believing in Christ can miscarry, but through a voluntary neglect of, or departure from him. It is no violence done to him can force him but by his own consent. The case of a Believer, as we shewed before, is like the condition of a man, that
though

though very weak and unable of himself to resist or stand against the power of his enemies, yet hath a strong Castle or Tower, in which he is so strongly fortified, and so every way unattachable, by either storming, undermining or starving of him, that there is certain safety for him in abiding in it, and no possibility for his enemies catching of him, unless he voluntarily go out of it. Such is the Believers condition being in Christ and God, nothing can come upon him to harm him (none can pluck or take him by force out of it) unless he willingly sin and depart from God and Christ after the knowledge of the Truth received; against which departing and drawing back from, and forsaking God, and so their *own mercies*, the Spirit of God therefore by his Servants is diligently provoking and exhorting them; as, *Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; and let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that hath promised, Cast not away your confidence, &c, Heb. 3. 12. and 10. 23, 35.*

2. That because Satan by himself and Instruments is crafty, subtle and vigilant, to intice, allure and tempt Believers to make a voluntary defection from God and Christ, either to avoid the difficulties and troubles in and to the flesh, that he endeavours to fill them with, and which God, for the tryal of their faith in him, and love and obedience to him, exercises him with, or permits and orders to come upon him, or else to gain the sweetness and profit of other carnal or worldly enjoyments

injoyments set before him; therefore that he take and make use of all those weapons of defence, those Arguments of the Gospel, and observe those wayes and rules appointed him therein (with watchfulness thereunto, and against the wiles and workings of the Adversary) with which God hath furnished him, and unto which he hath directed him in Jesus Christ, taking heed of listening to, and being moved by any of those subtle Arguments, brought by the Adversary to him, to dissuade him from his stedfastness in the faith, and constancy of his profession; whether from the dangers threatened him, should he hold fast his purpose and way, or the insufficiency either in himself, or in God and Christ to defend him from them, or from the many sweet and pleasant injoyments to the flesh or spirit in some other wayes to be obtained by him; but minding what answers thereto, and there against the Word and Testimony of God doth afford him, diligently to take heed to them, and oppose them there against, and so to take heed of walking in any such ways, as in which the Adversary may find him out of Gods protection, and naked, and open to his temptations.

To this purpose are those many counsels, to *Watch and stand fast, quit themselves like men, and be strong, 1 Cor. 16. 13. To take heed to themselves and put on the whole Armour of God, and therein to resist Satan, and yet still to stand, to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, &c.* Unto which things God having in his favour abundantly furnished them; expects and requires their care and diligence, and exercise of their powers and

and faculties for their own defence: and that because,

1. God hath not called us to Christ to be idle and do nothing, but to be active and obedient; he hath called us not to glory, only so as Christ should without us necessitate us to it, but also to vertue, that we might in the strength of Christ given us travel in his wayes toward the injoyment of it, and with his spiritual Weapons fight manfully and valiantly against all those Adversaries that would spoil us or cheat us of it. *We are Gods workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, fore-ordained by him, that we might walk in them, and as trees of righteousness, that we might bear and bring forth the fruits of righteousness unto his glory, and be a peculiar people for him, zealous of good works:* And therefore he expecteth from us, and requireth of us, in the strength, vertue and power that he gives us to walk and war, to do good, bring forth fruits, abound in good works, &c. And if being so furnished by him with his Grace, as that we may do and abound in these things, we do fail his expectation and desire, sit still instead of marching on toward the heavenly Canaan, or draw back again towards Egypt, sling down our Weapons, or like Ephraim, being harnessed, turn our backs upon our enemies in the day of battel, and so yield up our selves to the power of their temptations, not exercising our selves to good works, nor bringing forth good fruits, but the contrary: How can the most holy and pure Majesty, that hates iniquity, slothfulness and cowardliness, approve or

own us, especially if through our sloth and cowardliness we yield our selves to his and our enemies, and let them do what they will with us, and so take part with them against him, who hath done so much for us, and put so great engagements to him upon us. For

2. He hath called us to glory also, that we may be a glorious honourable people to him, and he have glory by us, that we might be for a name and for a praise to him by our vertuousness, fruitfulness, strength, courage, wisdom and well doing in the power of his Grace; now he should be dishonoured, and disparaged by us, and we be an inglorious, shameful people our selves, if being so fortified, and furnished for resistance against our enemies, we should yet do nothing against them, but be alwayes meerly passives; as those that are alwayes Babes and Children, that have received from Christ nothing of manhood and courage in us, that must have all done meerly for us without us, and we do nothing in and by Christ, in which he may have glory by us; *Hertin is God glorified, that we bring forth much fruit*; and so that we by the help of his right hand do valiantly, quitting our selves like men, and being strong, behaving our selves wisely, and not doing as fools, to be frighted from our station by every or any bugbear, or allured to part with our safety or happiness for the desire after some gew-gaw or trifle that looks somewhat bravely; therefore having so every way furnished us, he expects something therein from us, and puts something in the vertue thereof upon us; *Working in us of good pleasure to*

will

will and to do: He wills us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and to do all things without murmuring or disputing, that we might be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke and blame in a crooked generation, Phil. 2. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. That the courage, wisdom, power, vertues of God appearing in us, no *Momus* or Carper might find any just ground of reviling us, as being saved of God, but wholly destitute of the vertues of God, and unserviceable to God, as having nothing but a righteousness imputed to us, without any power or life of God working in us, or wrought forth by us. Yea, and

3. Otherwise the gifts and furniture of God, his spiritual weapons, provided for us and brought to our hands, should be in vain, if he should so do all for us, as to leave us wholly idle, and put nothing upon us in his strength, and power, and by his Weapons of righteousness to be done by us. Sure God gives the manifestations of his Spirit to his people to profit with, 1 Cor. 12. 7. He gives us not his Armour, Shield and Sword to lye and rust by us, but to be put on and used by us; yea, he gives us life and bread to nourish our life, and strength with our life, and wisdom with our strength, to the end that we might use them in his way, work and service for our own defence, and the defence of his Truth, against his, its and our enemies. He gives us not talents to bury up in the earth, but to trade with for his honour and advantage. He lights not a candle to put it under a bed of sloth, or hide it under a bushel, by some scanty

limiting it to some few, but to be set upon a Candlestick that it may give light to all that come into the house. In a word he doth nothing, he gives nothing to us in vain but for use and service. And to what better use, or of greater concernment can we imploy what he gives us, than to keep our selves and one another in the love of God, seeing therein lies our welfare and happiness, and out of that nothing but wo and misery can befall us.

It is true that it is his work to keep us safe but in our hearing and following him and his Counsels, and so in keeping to him; as it's the Castle and strong hold that keeps the man that flies to it, but it is in his keeping within it, and not departing out of it, because of any assaults made against it, or flatteries of the enemy that would intice him out of it. Yea, it is the goodness, strength, and every way commodiousness of the strong hold considered by him that is in it that arms him also against those fears or inticements from without that endeavour to make him leave it. Even so it is only Christ abiding in by men that every way secures the Soul against all assaults it from men or Devils; and it is the diligent consideration of Christ as the great Saviour, and means, yea, Author of safety and happiness provided for us of God, and the infinite excellencies and preciousness of him, as delivered up for our offences, and raised again for our justification, and glorified at Gods right hand, as Lord and Christ; that being considered by us, prevails with the Soul to abide in him: whence to that purpose, the Apostles every where make it their business to set forth the fulness and faithfulness

ness of Christ, the infinite abiding vertues of his Sacrifice with God and for men; his wonderful mercy and compassionateness, the fulness and completeness of the righteousness, and the abundance of the Redemption in him, the infiniteness of his power and wisdom, &c. to move and persuade believers to abide him, and not listen to the enemy or wander out of him after any other way, name, thing or person in whole or in part from him, *Col. 2. 1. ver. 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, Gal. 3, 7, 9, 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29* as also to that purpose they exhort us to consider him and the excellencies in him as *Heb. 3. 1. and 12. 2. Consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession Jesus Christ, who was faithful in all things to him that appointed him as Moses also was; and consider him who endured such contradictions of sinners, lest ye be weary and faint in your mindes: So Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. and 10. 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 35, 36, 37, &c.* the want of which or slothfulness in it lays open the Soul to the power of Sathans temptations and false Teachers seducements. It is his work to keep us then, but in his way to be sought for and waited for by us: which being our work (though that also in his power and strength) we may well be exhorted to *keep our selves that the wicked one touch us not. According to that in Prov. 4. 6. Forsake her not and she shall preserve thee, love her and she shall keep thee.* Wisdom will keep us in our cleaving to her, and depending upon her to keep us; she will preserve us in our loving her and observing her instructions, to which also her goodness and the goodness of her instructions will allure us,

if considered by us, and if proved and tryed by us in our listning to and obeying her Counsels. Its his work in our looking to and obeying him: its our work in the strength and helpfulness afforded to us by him and in his keeping us. He keeps those that trust in him as a hen that defends from the Kite the Chickens running under her wings; but as there if the chickens straggle and come not when she clocks, they may be catched up and devoured: so unless we come and stay under the wings (in the Doctrine and obedience) of Christ, or at his clock or call return again to him from our strayings from him we may be devoured by the adversary of our Salvation.

Use. All which things being duly considered by us may both confute and admonish us of divers vain, evil, and false conceptions, that betray mens Souls into the snares of death, and may awaken and provoke us to diligence in taking heed to our standings, and taking to us and making use of the whole armour of God to resist our Adversaries: as,

1. It reprehends and shews the falshood of that conception, that if a man be once in the love and Grace of God, he must of necessity abide so always, no possibility of his falling therefrom. *Once a Son and alway so, no sin can un-son him: that is once a Son of God: whomsoever God loves once, he loves for ever, and the like; for which they usually quote that in John 13.1. which is but, That Christ having so loved his own that were in the world loved them*

them to the end: that is, he loved his Disciples to the end of the time of his being in the world with them. He loved, that is, took all occasions to testify also his love, and accordingly even till his death testified it in his words and works to them; yet so as he bids *them abide in him, and continue in his love. Take heed lest any deceive them*, as implying that for all this his great love toward them, they were not out of all possibility of being deceived or departing from him, if they should be careless as conceiving such a thing impossible, they might be circumvented and not continue in his love. Yea, he tells *Peter*, that *except he wash him he should have no part in him*, John 13. 8. and sure all his exhorting them to keep his Commandments and abide in him, &c. imply at least a possibility of their doing otherwise; and no need to have been so earnest to exhort them to such things. Again, we have seen before what the Apostle said to and of the *Galatians*, whom he asserts to have been Sons and known of God, what fear he had of them, what warnings he gives them, and what he supposes might, yea, and affirms would befall them if they went on to follow after the false Apostles who had begun to seduce them.

Indeed all the Scriptures do shew sufficiently the certain attainment of eternal life by those that are careful to wait upon God, and look diligently to him by Jesus Christ for his supplying, keeping and saving of them: that *wait upon him and keep his way*: that *hear Christ's voice and follow him*, and do not presume to turn away from him or sit loose from his instructions by which they may and *should be kept close to him*; but though *the just*
do

do live by faith, yet if he draw back, the Soul of God shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. 10. 39.

2. Again, such conceptions and sayings as import that God works so altogether and irresistibly in the believer as that he leaves nothing upon the Believer to do in order to his preservation in his love and favour; to which they alledge that in *Phih. 2. 12, 13. That it is God that worketh in you to will and to doe of good pleasure.* Where the Apostle asserts that not as an evidence or argument to prove that there is nothing therefore left for the believer to doe in which he may possibly fail, and to which he needs to be exhorted; but as the reason and ground wherefore the believer should be careful, to *work out his own Salvation with fear and trembling*; for which there would be no room or ground if God wrought all things in the believer; yea, and his working out too irresistibly, nor any need for to have exhorted them, if they could not chuse but so work upon the account of God's working in them. But the Apostle plainly implies, that because its God that works in and through the Grace revealed to and received by the Believer of good pleasure, *Is* as not bound or obliged so to work but only of his mercy and good will, therefore it behooves believers to yield up themselves to and in his operations to will and do and so to work out what he is working in them: and not to resist and quench his operations least so they should provoke him who is a free agent, and works only of good will, to be offended with them, and withdraw his operations and good Spirit by which he is operating and working in them from them, and then they can do nothing toward their

their salvation, but be in danger to goe back to destruction. As also the argument used ver. 16. to inforce that instruction upon them seems clearly to imply, in that he says, *That I may rejoyce in the day of Jesus Christ that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain:* for to what purpose should he mention such a thing with respect to them, if there had been no possibility of their failing of the Grace and happiness to which he laboured to bring them instrumentally: or if there was nothing to be done by them that might conduce to their obtaining the end of his running, and labouring amongst them, at least that could possibly be neglected and left undone by them, so as therethrough to indanger their failing thereof, and so a disappointment of the Apostles desire and hope concerning them? The whole Scripture, as it were suspending the tenour of the continuance of believers in Gods love and favour upon their keeping his Commandments, and exhorting therefore to diligence in observing and keeping them, shews the vanity of such apprehensions, and that there is something required on mans part to his being preserved in the Grace of God. *For sake her not and she shall preserve thee; love her and she shall keep thee,* Prov. 4. 6. *If ye love me keep my Commandments, and I will pray the Father, &c. And he that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved, (that is, continue to be loved) of my Father, and I will love him (continue to love him, as John 15. 10.) and I will manifest mine own self to him,* John 14. 21, 23. *Keep your selves in the love of God,*

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3. Again, it reproves and discovers the evil and naughtiness of these high and presumptuous thoughts which are the issue and fruit of the two former mentioned, *Deut. 29. 18, 19.* wherein men having believed and being pronounced righteous, and so being under the sentence of life, as *Ezek. 33. 13.* thereupon presume to commit iniquity, and lay in their hearts, that though they do so, and *add drunkenness to their thirst*, satisfy their vain and sinful desires and lust never so greedily, yet they are safe enough, they cannot miscarry but shall have peace and favour with God still; or if they may provoke God to some displeasure against them, so as to chastise them, yet that shall be the worst that shall or may befall them. These thoughts also ^{are} contrary to what is foreshewed, and to many serious threats in the Scriptures, as that *the Lord will not spare such an one, but then his wrath and his jealousy shall smoke against him; and the Lord shall blot his name from under Heaven*, *Deut. 29. 20.* and that he who when God hath said unto him as *righteous; thou shalt surely live*, shall thereupon trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity shall surely die, *Ezek. 33. 13.* and therefore even believers are admonished *not to be high minded but fear*, *Rom. 11. 20, 21, 22.*

2. It also serves to exhort and provoke believers to watchfulness, care, and diligence in taking heed to the Grace of God, and cleaving thereto and quitting themselves as men, that they may continue and abide in that state of love and favor to which they are freely chosen of God in Christ,

making their calling *firm and sure*, as 2 Pet. 1. 10. to that purpose, *adding to, or in their faith vertue*, or courage for God and his truth, and against Satan, sin and all that stands cross to their well-doing : *and in vertue knowledge*, to direct and guide all their zeal and courage aright : *and in knowledge temperance*, sobriety in thoughts of themselves, *not* aspiring to pry into things above ~~their~~ ^{they} reach, or that they have not seen in the testimony of God : as also temperance in use of the mercies of God in the things of this life, and of their liberties thereto to which their knowledge makes way ; least by undue use of their liberties ^{they} offend others, and *in their temperance patience*, both to continue therein, denying themselves, and abstaining from fleshly lusts, and also in induring whatsoever sufferings and adversities may befall them in their way ; and *in patience Godliness*, an acknowledgement of God and his power and goodness, and a depending on him, and looking to him in all things, and making him the *Alpha* and *Omega* of their lives and actions, receiving all from him, and living in all things to him by Jesus Christ ; and *in godliness Brotherly kindness*, an hearty intire love of the Brethren, being kind and courteous and of one minde with them, loving as Brethren and Heirs together of the same Grace and inheritance ; and *in Brotherly kindness charity*, a free and gracious affection and love to men, not for any goodness in them rendering them worthy of love as in Brotherly kindness, but because of Gods free and gracious love and affection both to us and them : so loving others,

others, even all men, as we are loved of God as men, seeking to win by love those that are without and to doe them good even as he hath done to us though unworthy of love from him. *If we doe those things we shall never fall*: if we goe on thus, adding Grace to Grace, Growing in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To such like purposes, both our Lord himself and his Servants have given manifold exhortations and Counsels, *As to watch and pray that we fall not into Temptation. To take heed lest our hearts at any time be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, &c. to take heed of false Prophets, and that no man deceive us. To give all diligence that we fail not of (or fall not off from) the Grace of God. To beware of slothfulness, because that easeth into a deep sleep of Spiritual security and carelesness; and then a man lies open to the enemy to fall upon him and destroy or devour him, but to follow the steps of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises: exhortations and warnings, and provocations by manifold Arguments to all diligence in this matter are every where obvious in the Scriptures to believers: and that that is said and shewed before both of the possibility and danger of failing otherwise of the Grace and love of God, as to its continuance, and the fearful things that befall in such a case, as also the certainty of abiding in it, and obtaining unspeakable joy and happiness in our care and diligence in depending on God and Christ, and expectation of such diligence and earnestness in us, may incite and provoke to the diligence,*
circum-

circumspection, and watchfulness exhorted too, and reprove that too great carelessness, negligence and slothfulness in these matters of so great concernment, too ordinarily found even in Believers: as it was found and reprov'd in the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*, leaving his first love; and in the Angel of the Church of *Sardis*, that had almost quite lost all his strength, so as that he was ready to die: and in the Church of *Laodicea*, or the Angel thereof grown *Lukewarm*, & therefore ready to be spewed out of Christs mouth; unless he awakened up to zeal and diligence, and repented of his indifferencie upon Christs reproofs of him, ¶ *Rev. 2. 4, 5. and 3. 1, 2, 14, 15, 16, 19.* Oh, it is a great shame for us to be careful and diligent to keep or increase our Estates, or Honours here in this World, which after a while do what we can, must be taken from us from us, or we from them: and to be so indifferent and negligent about retaining that Grace and favour of God whereto he hath admitted us by Jesus Christ, as if it were not of that worth and excellencie as those other poor, fading, and uncertain matters, when as it is the source, spring and fountain of all blessedness and happiness.

But I shall pass from this first and main matter of the Text to the next:

The way and mean to keep our selves in God's love, and that is edifying our selves in our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost: whence we may note, That,

Observe.

Observ. 5. The way for Believers to keep themselves in the love of God is to edifie themselves on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Here be two means.

- { 1. Edifying themselves on their most holy Faith:
 2. Praying in the Holy Ghost.

Let us, if God permit, consider them in order: And first,

1. Divers things as to the first of them are to be explained for better understanding and usefulness of the Proposition as to that Branch of it, as to say,

1. What is meant by the Faith here on which Believers are to build up themselves and one another.

2. Why is it called their Faith.

3. Why is it called their most holy Faith.

4. What that is that is to be builded on it.

5. How the believer is to be builded on it. And,

6. What that signifies that they build up themselves, and how that they may do that.

7. How the building up themselves thereon conduceth to the keeping themselves in the love of God.

1. For the Faith here mentioned, what it is or signifies, we are to mind that the word Faith is is used two ways; either,

1. For the act or habit of believing, and so it often signifies, as in these expressions, *Lord increase our faith: and if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye should be able to say to this Sycamore tree,*

be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted into the midst of the Sea, and it should obey you, Luke 17. 4, 5. Your faith is spoken of throughout the world, Rom. 1. 5. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing is of the word of God, Rom. 10. 17. After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the Saints, Ephes. 1: 15. and many others.

* 2. For the Doctrine of faith, and the matter and object of faith in it contained; to that purpose is that of Paul, Gal. 1: 22. He that persecuted us, now preaches the faith that he destroyed: So Gal. 3. 2. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith. So verse 5. and 7. and 9. They that be of Faith, the same are the Children of Abraham, and are blessed with faithful Abraham. Now in as much as the Faith or Doctrine preached is also called the preaching of Christ, or of Jesus Christ; Acts 9. 20. Rom. 16. 25. 1 Cor. 1. 22, 24. We preach Christ crucified: And 2 Cor. 4. 5. We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord: Therefore even Christ himself, as preached and declared in the Gospel, may also be contained in the signification of the word Faith, when taken in this second sense and meaning.

Now that the word faith is not meant here in the former, but in the latter sense, is evident, because it is here represented as the foundation to be built upon, or matter wherewith they were to be built up, but that is not faith, as it signifies the act or habit of believing; for that is something built rather upon the foundation, or at most the way or means of building, or being built

on it. Christ himself, as held forth in the Apostles Doctrine, or also the Apostles Doctrine, as holding forth Christ in it, is the foundation, and is so spoken of in the Apostles Writings, as in 1 Cor. 3. 11. *Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* What more plain, than that Jesus Christ is the only foundation laid of God, and of his Apostles in their Doctrine: To this purpose it is, that the Apostle Peter quotes that Scripture of the Prophet Isaiah, Chap. 28. 16. and applies it to Christ, in 1 Pet. 2. 4. 6. where having called him the *Living Stone, chosen of God and precious*; he saith, *Wherefore it is contained in the Scriptures, behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded:* Unto you therefore which believe he is precious, &c. This is that foundation which the Apostle speaks of to Timothy, when he saith, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure (sure, or firm) having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, &c.* For therein God seals to it, owns and approves or knows all that be his, the foundations namely, or knows the foundation it self, as peculiarly his, as Christ is; and others that are his in him, by vertue of him known and owned by him; as also in this, that he allows not any in iniquity that name his Name; though by vertue of Christ held forth in the Apostles Doctrine, that also may secondarily be called the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, as in Ephes. 2. 20. *Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.*

That

That Doctrine then (or Christ himself as therein preached, as the Son of God and Saviour of the World, delivered up to death and crucified for our offences, and raised again from the dead for our justification, and glorified at Gods right hand for our salvation, and that our faith and hope might be in God, and so as appointed to be Lord and Christ, the Judge of all, who shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead) is the faith here meant, whereon Believers are to edifie and build up themselves, and not their act, acts or habit of believing, which may be added to and builded up, being imperfect, upon this foundation, so as this foundation cannot upon any thing else; yea, that Christ, as so laid and held forth in the Cospel, is the foundation to be built on is plain. For

1. Christ was the first thing appointed or laid of God for fallen mankind, as to his purpose and promise of him; and he was the first thing preached to him, in order to his return to God: This was the Doctrine first preached in Paradise, after our first Parents had sinned, and were convicted thereof: *I will put enmity between thee (the Serpent) and the Woman, and between thy seed and her seed: He (her seed) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Though Christ was not as then actually manifested in the flesh, crucified, dead, buried and raised again, yet all that was intimately preached from the beginning, as a thing to be accomplished in its time and season.

2. And as this was the first thing or Doctrine preached, so it was the foundation and ground of all other dispensations of God after to fallen man. It is upon that account of Christs having interposed between God and us, as the bruiser of the Serpents head, the destroyer of his work, the taker away and abolisher of Death, that God now deals mercifully and graciously with men; is inviting and leading them to repentance by his goodness and forbearance, and lades them with his benefits, and sends forth his light and truth to men, to call them back to himself and to his Kingdom, to be under his government and protection, from which they were banished for their iniquity; and so it is the ground and foundation of his Ordinances, witnessing of Christ, and of himself in Christ unto men, and appointed as mediums for mens approaching to him, and seeking of him, and of Gods raising up and judging all men according to their works hereafter; for there would have been no resurrection from the first death to any new judgment, much less to life, if Christ had not come and dyed for all men, and risen again, 1 Cor. 15. 12, 17, 18. Acts 10. 42. and 17. 30, 31. The final rewards and recompencings of men then, (as also his present chastisements in mercy and measure now) and accepting and justifying, saving and honouring those that believe in him, and serve him, stand upon Christ, and his death and sufferings for all men, and rising again, and being appointed Lord of all, and Mediator of God and men, the propitiation for our sins, even for the sins of the whole world, as their proper ground and foundation. Yea,

3. He, as so set forth, is the ground and foundation of all right repenting and turning to God from our our sins, and of all right believing, hoping and trusting in God for his mercy and blessing, of all prayers and praises to be made to God, and so of all true piety and religion in fallen men; for had there not been such a Ransome found out, and Sacrifice offered for us, there could have been no approach for us to God, or acquaintance with God: *God sent him, that the world through him might be saved, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God, John 3.17. 1 Pet. 2.21.* So that he, and the Word of the Gospel as setting him forth, is meant by the faith here, on which Believers are built, and to build up themselves and each other.

2. Now this is called their faith, not because it is of them, of their invention, broaching, or preparing, as a foundation for themselves or others, but because it is owned, received and confessed by them; it is that that they have and believe in their hearts unto righteousness, and with their mouths confess to the salvation of themselves and others, as *Paul* sometimes calls the Gospel he preached, his Gospel, as in *2 Tim. 2. 8. According to my Gospel:* And so *Rom. 2. 16.* Not because it was of him found out or invented, or set on foot by him, as if he had preached anything for Gospel that he had not received from God and Christ, but because it was ministred and preached by him; even so this faith after the same manner is called the Believers faith, as elsewhere, *The faith of Gods Elect, Tit. 1. 2.* because made known

and delivered to his elected and chosen Servants, such as he chose to be his Servants (the holy Apostles and Prophets) to be declared and published by them, as accordingly it was published by them, and as it is called, *The faith once delivered to the Saints*, in this Epistle of *Jude*, ver. 3. because it was delivered to them, and preached by them, it might be called their faith, though otherwise it is the faith of God and Christ: Yea, and in calling it the faith of these believers, the Apostle intimately distinguisheth it from the false faiths or false doctrines of the false Teachers and Seducers, of whom he had been warning them; as if he should say, it is not their faith, they have corrupted themselves and fallen away from it, and have received, or devised, and broached another faith, doctrine or foundation different from, and repugnant to yours, with which I would have you have nothing to do, much less build your selves thereon, for that would not render you an house or habitation for God, and so objects of his favour, but Synagogues of Satan, and objects of Gods wrath and anger; but build ye up your selves on your faith, which he also, the better to induce them thereto, calls their most holy faith. Which leads us to the third particular.

3. Why it is called the most holy faith.

1. It is holy, that is, it is pure, faultless, no falshood or corruption in it, for so holiness is sometimes opposed to uncleanness or filthiness: as, *We are not called to uncleanness, but unto holiness*; 1 Thes. 4. 7. *Cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the*

the fear of the Lord, 2 Cor. 7. 1. So this Doctrine delivered to the Saints, preached by the holy Apostles and Prophets, and witnessed to by the holy Spirit, and so by the holy God, who bare witness to the Preachers of it, both with Signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, Heb. 24. is a holy, pure, clean Word; The Word of the Lord (as the Gospel of Jesus Christ as preached by the Apostles, is often called, as in Acts 6. 2, 7. and 8. 25. and 12. 24. and 13. 5, 7, 12, 44, 46 49.) is pure as Silver seven times tryed in the fire, Psal. 12. 6. No dross or mixture in it; it is not yea and nay, but yea, yea, or yea and Amen, as in 2 Cor. 1. 18, 19. As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay, for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea, for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. The Apostles did speak in simplicity and sincerity what they had heard and received from God and Christ, and did not, as the false Apostles, sophisticate and corrupt the Word of God, as the Apostle also saith, 2 Cor. 2. 17. But as in sincerity, and as of God they spake in Christ in the sight of God. Even as Jesus Christ himself, the matter and subject of their word, the faith or foundation of faith, the object to be closed with, and rested or built upon, is the holy One (the holy One of Israel) and so is frequently stiled, as Acts 3. 14. Ye denied the holy One and the just. So 1 John 2. 20. Ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things: And Heb. 7. 26. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, &c. a spotless one, a Lamb without blemish; his na-

ture, and life, and death, and sacrifice, and person, altogether blameless, sinless, and undefiled; even so the Doctrine of the Apostles concerning him was pure and clean too, like to *pure water*. No soil or mud in it. Yea, and

2. It was and is set apart, separated and devoted to God, and for his glory, to be the foundation, ground and way of our believing, and so becoming an holy habitation and people for God. Jesus Christ, the main matter and subject treated of in the Gospel, is in that sense holy to God, chosen by him, separated and set apart for him, to be *his salvation to the ends of the earth; the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world; his righteous Servant*, in whose hand his pleasure shall prosper; *his Elect, in whom his Soul delighteth*; who hath sanctified himself, and given up himself to him to do his will in all things; to be his Prophet to declare his mind, *and bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and light to the people*; to be his High-Priest, as it is said, *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest to me for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck, Psal. 110, 3, 4.* to make atonement for the sins of the people, offer up their gifts and sacrifices, and make intercession for all that come to God by him, *Heb. 2. 17, and 5. 1. and 7. 25.* and blefs them in his Name, *Heb. 7. 6, 7.* His King, *whom he hath set upon his holy hill of Sion, Psal. 2. 6, 7.* being wholly holy unto God to do his pleasure in his presence for men, and from him to and with men, *Rom. 6. 10.* his Foundation, namely, that he hath lay in *Sion*, to be the foundation and corner-stone

of

of his holy building, an habitation for his Holiness and glory, by vertue of whom it is that the whole building becomes an holy House to God, and an habitation separated unto him to dwell in by his Spirit, as *Ephes. 2. 20, 21.* And so the Doctrine or Faith concerning him is holy, separated and set apart for Gods use, for drawing men into the knowledg and faith of Christ, and so to himself by and through him, and therefore it is called, *The power of God to salvation to everyone that believes, Rom. 1. 16.* The Medium that he made choice of for saving those that believe it, and so through it believe in him, *1 Cor. 1. 21.* so that in this respect too it is holy. As also,

3. In respect of the effect and fruit of it, it makes holy those that receive it, and are united with it, and built upon it: So Jesus Christ, the main matter and subject of it, the foundation properly laid in it and by it for men to believe in and be built on, is not only holy in himself, sinless and set apart for God, but also *made of God holiness to us*, the cause of holiness to us. He in and by vertue of whom we are holy to God, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* He being the holy Temple and habitation of God, makes us so too in being united with him. He being the holy foundation makes all the building holy. And so the Doctrine of the Apostles preached and published concerning him, and received and held fast by these Believers, was holy in respect of the effect and fruit of it in Believers, who are said to be *sanctified by the faith in Christ Jesus, Acts 26. 28.* Sanctified (or made holy) *through Gods Word, which is the Truth, John 17. 17.* and to be *made clean through the Word spoken*

to them, John 15. 3. *Sanctified and washed by the washing of water (the Love, Grace and Knowledge of God held forth) in the Word, that they might be presented a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy, and without blame or blemish, Ephes. 5. 26; 27. as also the holiness of the new man is therefore, in Ephes. 4. 22. called, according to the Greek, ἡ ἀληθεία, The holiness of truth, because the effect or product of the Truth believed by men: To this purpose are those sayings of David, in Psal. 119. 9, 11. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his wayes? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word: And again, I have hid thy Word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee, &c. Yea,*

4. It is called the holy Faith, to signifie the great care that God hath of it, its acceptableness to him, and his respect to and care of it; as in that sense in Jer. 2. 3. *Israel was said to be holiness to the Lord, being his people, his peculiar portion, he had an especial care over them to defend them, so as that all that devoured them, offended, evil came or shall come upon them. So is Christi holiness to the Lord, very dear and delightful to him, and therefore especially cared for and defended by him; as in Psal. 89. 24. With him his right hand is established, and his arm strengthens him, so as the enemy shall not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him, he will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. Yea, therefore they that believe not in him shall be condemned and perish, and they shall be destroyed that will not hear and obey him: Mat.*

28. 18, 19. with *Mark* 16. 15, 16. *Acts* 3. 22, 23. And so God hath a singular watchfulness over, and care of his Name and Doctrine; the Gospel of Christ preaching and declaring him as the foundation of God for men, so as that he will not bear that it should be slighted, rejected and disobeyed by men; *It shall be easier in the judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those that so do, Matth.* 10. 15. with *John* 12. 48, 49 50. His presence is in and with it, and it is a ministration of life, righteousness and spirit, as in *2 Cor.* 3. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, &c. thus the Faith is holy. But

2. Its also called the most Holy, to signify,

1. The superlative holiness, and more abundant excellency of it above other holy things; as to say,

1. There were many things or persons types of Christ, holy to God under the Law, and some of them more holy, and more set apart than others; as there was the whole people holy to God, *The holy people, Dan.* 12. 7. and *Deut.* 7. 6. *The holy seed, Ezra* 9. 2. The Levites were yet more holy, as being chosen and taken out of the people, to do the service of the Tabernacle in lieu of the first-born, which God hallowed and chose for himself, to be peculiarly his above the after-births of them, *Exod.* 13. 4. with *Numb.* 3. 12, 13. and yet the Priests were more holy than they, as having liberty to the holy Place, and to go into the Tabernacle, and offer upon the Altar, which the Levites might not do; and yet the High-Priest was more holy than they, as only having liberty

liberty to enter the Holy of Holies, *Levit. 21. 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, &c.* But Jesus Christ is more holy than them all, the most holy Person, that appears where *Aaron* or none of them might, *even in the Heavens themselves*, and by the vertue of his own blood to make intercession for us; none holy like him, who is the Lord, nor any Rock like our God, *1 Sam. 2. 2, 3.* Yea, there were many things holy, as the Land was the holy Land, *Zech. 2. 12.* and the portion of it set apart for the Sanctuary more holy, *Ezek. 45. 1.* The Chambers of the Priests holy, *Ezek. 42. 13.* Their Garments holy, *Exod. 28. 20. and 29. 29.* The Crown put upon *Aaron* was the holy Crown, *Levit. 8. 9.* The Altar was holy, yea, most holy, and whatsoever touched it was holy, *Exod. 29. 37.* The Sanctuary and all the Vessels of it holy, *Levit. 16. 33. 1 Chron. 22. 19.* Yea, the Trumpets and other Instruments, *Numb. 31. 6.* The Oracle or inner-place of the Sanctuary and Temple was most holy, and therefore called the Holy of Holies, and the most holy place; as the Ointment made to anoint and sanctifie them, and the Priests, was most holy: but yet Christ was more holy than they or any of them, the most holy One, the truth of them all, they were but types and figures of him, and their holiness of his; yea there were holy Prophets, and holy Apostles, but yet he more holy than they, the most holy One, none so pure, spotless or undefiled; the holiest Places and Vessels contracted soil and dust, and needed cleansing sometimes, and were sometimes defiled with Idols and other pollutions, and needed an atonement to be made for them, and at last, because of the pollutions wherewith they were

were polluted, they were given up to spoil, to fire, and to Captivity; none of which can befall the Son of God, though he was once put to death for our sins which were charged upon him, yet being raised *he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him; in that he died once he died unto sin, but in that he liveth, he liveth now unto God, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the Heavens who needeth not daily as those other Priests, to offer first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for this he did once, &c. Heb. 7. 26, 27.*

The holiest Priests had their sins, properly their own to offer for, he never did sin, nor was guile found in his mouth; the holy Prophets and Apostles had their sins and failings. *Moses* the meekest man on earth, yet once spake unadvisedly with his lips, in his anger, and provoked God to deprive him of entering into the Land of *Canaan*. *Aaron* the Saint of the Lord made a molten calf, also at the instance of the people. *David* the man after God's own heart, yet fell very grievously. So did *Solomon* the wisest; yea, none of the Patriarchs but in offering Sacrifices for sins therein, confessed themselves to stand in need of mercy and forgiveness. The Apostles confessed sins in them; and tell us, if they had said there was no sin in them, or that they had not sinned, they should have deceived themselves and the truth had not been in them. But Christ was the perfectly spotless One in whom is no sin. Nay, the very Angels veil their faces, and cover their feet in his presence, as appears by, what *Isaiab* saith, when he saw his Glory in a Vision, and spake of him, *Isa. 6. 1, 2 3. 4.* with *John*

12. 40, 41. so that he is absolutely the most Holy One ; and therefore also the most consecrated and devoted unto God ; the Levites might come nearer to the Sanctuary , and so to God as dwelling in it, than the generallity of the people , and the Priests nearer than the Levites ; and the High Priest nearer than the rest of the Priests ; but Christ comes nearer than any. *For he is not entred into the Holy places made with hands as they did, but into Heaven it self, there to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24.* Yea, neither Saint nor Angel is so devoted to God, or admitted so neer to him, as Christ ; they are about the Throne , but Christ is in the midst of it : yea , and though the four Beasts figuring the Camp of the Saints or their Leaders be said also to be in the midst of the Throne as well as round about it ; yet the Lamb is in the midst of them , as the most inmost amongst them, *Rev. 4. 4 6. and 5. 6, 11.* and therefore also the most Holy , both as to his efficacie and vertue for conferring holiness upon others : it being He only that *is made to us of God wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption.* No man or Angel hath that honour with or besides him : the holy, and holy-making Spirit is fully and immeasurably only upon him , and sent forth by and from ^{him and} in his name. Saints and Angels have not that honour and power as he ; and therefore also as to Gods tender care of him, or height of love to him they are below him ; *For to which of the Angels said he at any time, sit thou on my right hand or thy Throne, O God, endureth for ever ? &c.* So that in all respects none holy as he , none else the foundation , the holy foundation of God's holy building

building but he. *Other foundations can no man lay but him*, 1 Cor. 3.11. and so,

2. In a sense the Doctrine or faith of him, as setting him forth to and for men is most holy in all these respects; more holy than any other vessel, utensil or instrument made use of by God, or at his appointment under the Law and legal dispensation; though there were divers and some more holy than others; yet the Gospel is above them all. The most choise *medium* of God's power both spotless and pure in it self, as being his word, and most chosen, and set apart to be *his arm for salvation to all that believe*, and therefore fuller of divine efficacie for making holy, and more choisely cared for and defended of God, being the *Everlasting Gospel*, and the neglects and contempt of it, most severely punished, *Matth. 10. 15*. Some things under the Law conferred an holiness unto other things that touched them, or that they were applied to, as the Altar or the holy Oyntment, &c. but nothing so confer holiness as the Gospel doth them that attend to it and receive it. Its the *Unction*, the holy Oyntment, the *Name of Christ* therein held forth is as an Oyntment poured out, *Cant. 1. 3*. which sanctifies, consecrates and makes holy to God all that receive it, as *Act. 26. 18*. *Sanctified by the faith that is in me*, and *1 Cor. 6. 11*. *Ye are sanctified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The Law was holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good, but not able to sanctifie and make the Conscience perfect, because of the flesh that it could nor subdue: but the Gospel faith is so holy and set apart for Gods use and service*

vice as the *medium* for his sanctifying and saving men, that his presence and Spirit, even the Holy Spirit is in or with it, and his influence or operation ministred by it, to the sanctifying and devoting the hearts and Spirits of all that receive it unto God; *Sanctifie them through thy truth, thy word is the truth*, John 17. 17. Yea, and as it is now plainly and fully opened and preached since the coming of Christ, it is more full of Spirit and divine power for sanctifying and making holy, and therefore also requires and calls for more holiness in the hearers and professors of it than any former dispensations. For now in these *last ages* God who in former times spake to the Fathers by the Prophets, and to them by Angels, Dreams, and Visions hath spoken his mind most fully to us by his onely begotten Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and by whom he also made the Worlds, Heb. 1. 1, 2. and therefore now requires more strict obedience and more exact conformity to his minde, and more severely punishes the neglectors and abusers of his Gospel and the Grace thereof, than he did in former times exact or expect from men under the Mosaical dispensation, and then he punished the neglectors and abusers thereof or of any holy things then in use, Heb. 2. 1, 2, 3. and 10. 26, 29. and 12. 18, 19, 24, 25. If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression there against received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and afterward was confirmed to us by them that heard him: So the Faith of the Saints is the most holy faith, and so called here, as also because of,

2. Its most absolute compleatness and perfection. It is so holy that nothing can be added to it, to make it more holy, perfect, pure, or apt and fit for the purpose to which it is ordained: as, to be the foundation of Faith, hope, love, obedience, &c. and the mean or *medium* for effecting them; and so of making holy to God those that receive it. Christ is the most full and compleat foundation of Gods Building, who is so perfected through sufferings, as to become the *Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. Yea, so as *all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, and in him we are compleat, who is the Head of all Principallity and power*, Col. 2. 9, 10. *made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. a most sure foundation and precious corner stone, so as that *he that believes on him shall not be confounded, or make haste from him for any thing that threatens to shake or ruine him.* The Soul that believes in him findes so much holiness and preciousness in him, *Isa. 28. 16. 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7.* there can nothing be added to the excellencie of his person, being the onely begotten Son of God, nor to the vertue and preciousness of this Sacrifice, having offered up himself a spotless Sacrifice, through the eternal Spirit, by which he hath at once perfected (or perfectly prepared all things for) the sanctified for ever, Heb. 9. 14. Heb. 10. 14. Nor to the dignity and perfection of his Priesthood, being consecrated of God by the word of his Oath, an High-Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedech; even according to the power of an endless life, Heb. 7. 17. 1 to the fulness of his Prophecie, or propheticall Pow-

er and Office, being acquainted with the whole minde of God, and filled with the fulness of the Holy Spirit, to declare it, and to make the declaration of it powerfull and effectual, and *all the treasures of wisdoms and knowledge being hid* (or treasured up) *in him*, and his Mystery, Col. 2. 3, 4. *Isa. 42. 1, 2, 3, 4. and 61. 1, 2, 3.* nor to his Power and Authority, as Lord and King; the fulness of Gods Power and Authority being given to him, even *all power in Heaven and Earth, a Name above every Name, that at his Name every knee should bow, both of things in Heaven and things in Earth, and things under Earth, &c. Angels and Principallities and Powers are made subject to him,* Philip. 2. 10, 11. 1 Pet. 3. 21, And so the Doctrine of faith that sets him forth is the most holy Faith, to signifie that its the most compleat, pure and perfect Doctrine, nothing to be added to it, nor taken from it. * The Doctrine of the Law that was very good, holy, and useful in its kind, but it was a ministration of Death, and in respect of the shadowness and typicalness of it, it was to pass away, as in 2 Cor. 3. is shewed; and so the Testimony or Covenant made therein, Heb. 8. 8, 9, 13. but this ministration of the Gospel as it came forth first in Paradise: so it is to continue & abide to the end; it is *the everlasting Gospel* that shall not pass till all be fulfilled & accomplished: indeed before the coming of Christ in the flesh it was not fully revealed as now it is in these last days by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, and therefore till then the Vision was not sealed, Dan. 9. 24. nor the Law and testimony fully bound up, *Isa. 8. 16.* but now it

it is fully revealed, so as no more is to be added till the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus in glory; when that *that is perfect being come, that that is in part shall be done away*: and there shall be no more need of teaching or saying to one another, *Know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest*; therefore these are called *the last times*, because no other change is to be made, nor any thing added till faith be turned into sight and fruition; and therefore the Apostle saith, if not only any man or Angel from Heaven preach against or contrary to, but if *we or any man or Angel preach anything beside (or different from or as adding something as matter of faith or foundation, to what we have preached, and ye received, let him be Anathema*, Gal. 1. 8, 9. and the Apostle John to the same purpose, *If any come to you and bring not this Doctrine receive him not to house, neither bid him God-speed, for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker also of his evil deeds*, 2 John 10, 11. Clearly implying that he that brings another Doctrine beside this faith *once delivered to the Saints*, recorded in the Epistles and writings of the holy Apostles and Evangelists doth evil therein; whatever works or deeds of zeal and piety he may do or seem to do with and in countenance of another Doctrine, they are altogether evil deeds, and not approved of God, nor to be approved of men.

3. And indeed the main reason why the Apostle calls the faith of these Believers the most holy faith, was to commend it to them, and move them to abide in it, hold it fast, and not suffer themselves by any pretences of Deceivers and false Apostles and Teachers to be waved therefrom. For the

false Apostles used that artifice to supplant the Believers from the belief of the truth, and turn them aside from the faith, that the Serpent used at the first with our first Parents to turn them from their belief of, and obedience to Gods word to them, as the Apostle so signifies in 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3, 13, 14, that is, as the Serpent to beguile *Eva*, pretended some want in their state that God had set them in; and some great defect in that great provision or allowance that God afforded them; even so the false Teachers, as Messengers of Satan did use to insinuate to the Believers of the Apostles Doctrine, and so in and on Christ as set forth therein, that there was some defect and want in that object of their faith, and in the way in which they sought justification and the favour of God; it was not a perfect and full way: but would they listen to them, they would shew them a more perfect faith or doctrine, and so a more full and perfect object and ground of faith and confidence and way to happiness than Christs Apostles had done; even as the Serpent perswaded *Eva*, that there was some more excellent vertue and quality in the forbidden fruit to advance them & make them liker God, than was in all the other enjoyments that God afforded them in Paradise. Therefore in opposition to that subtle and false insinuation, and to fortifie the Believers mindes there against, the Apostle there stiles it the most holy faith, as implying the perfection of it, that none can or may adde any thing to it, to make it holier or better; the adding to it is the corrupting, marring, and perverting of it, so that whatsoever Doctrine should add to, or alter it, should be not the

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the more but less holy, may indeed unholy: even as the adding any thing to the holy Oyntment under the Law spoiled it and rendred it unclean. This was an argument often made use of by the Apostles to arm the Believers against the false suggestions and cunning slights of the false Apostles, as may be seen in divers passages of their Epistle. As so the Apostle Paul mindes the *Colossians*, *That in Christ, and in the Mystery of God Father and Christ, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and, that in him dwells all the fulness of the God-head bodily*, to keep them from being seduced from the simplicity in Christ, or from the said mystery of God and Christ (which is the same that the Apostle calls the most holy faith here,) by any *enticing words, or vain Philosophy and deceit*, Col. 2. 2, 3, 4, 8, 10. and the Apostle John tells the believers, that *that which they had heard from the beginning abiding in them, they should abide in the Father and in the Son, and so enjoy the promise of eternal life: and that they had received an Unction from the Holy One which abiding in them they should not need that any should teach them, but as that taught them of all things*, meaning, that the Doctrine of Christ and the Spirit therein received were the onely sufficient and perfect guide, so as no teaching disagreeing from that was needful or behooveful for them, and this to arm them against those that seduced them, 1 John 2. 18, 24, 25, 26, 27. as also in Chapter 5. 11, 12, 13. he there mindes them, *that God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son, and that he that hath the Son hath eternal life, and he that hath not the Son hath not that life*; to the end that the believers to whom he wrote

might be assured, or might know against all the subtle, secret, and lying suggestions of the false Apostles to the contrary, perswading them that that Doctrine of Christ and that faith in him that they had, would not suffice to eternal life; but that it was needful that they should turn out to some new form of Doctrine and object of faith or adde something (as the observation of *Moses Law*) thereto, if they desired to be saved; I say, contrary to this, he tells them, he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life; that the believers might know that they have eternal life, that they might know that they were in a sure and certain way to it, and were at present by vertue of Christ believed in and had by them, heirs of it, and that in turning out from him and letting him go, they would deprive themselves of it, that so *they might believe* (that is, yet believe or continue to believe) *in the name of the only begotten Son of God*, and not turn from him after any thing else, that the false Teachers might propound to them as better for them and more full and certain; that being the way to deprive themselves of the good they were in, and of the life and happiness they were in Christ, heirs of; as also to the same purpose is that in *2 John 9.* where having warned them of deceivers, and wisht them to look to themselves, he adds, *Whoso transgresseth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ he hath not God; but whosoever abideth in the Doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son*; yea, whereas it was a false suggestion of the false Apostles, that the Doctrine of *Paul* and of other his Brethren, and so Christ as held forth therein was not able to

make

make the receivers thereof holy or perfect, though it might do wel to enter them into the way of life, yet something else was needful to be added to it, and further observed by them to perfect them, as is implied in that passage *Gal. 3. 3. Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye made perfect by the flesh*, those passages before recited (of letting that abide in them that they had heard from the beginning) namely, (in the first preaching of the Gospel to them, and their hearing it) or what was delivered first of all, or in the first things (as *Paul* says, *1 Cor. 15. 2, 3.*) and that therein they should have both *Father and Son*, and eternal life; (as also this expression of the Apostle, that the faith on which they were founded, is the most holy Faith) meets with and opposes that false conception of those deceivers, and implies, that there is nothing holier than this Doctrine, or Christ as held forth in it; nothing like it able to make them holy, to sanctifie and devote them to God, and render them his chosen and beloved people; as the nature of holiness stands in being separated to God, and so owned, chosen of & appropriated to him, nothing comparable in those respects to this holy faith of theirs, *your most holy faith*; yea, and as the Apostle having said to the *Galatians*, *If we, or an Angel from Heaven preach unto you besides what we have preached, let him be accursed*, adds in the next verse, *as I said before, so say I again, If any man preach any other Gospel than what ye have received, let him be accursed*; least some false Apostles should say, that they preacht no other Gospel or Doctrine than *Paul* and his fellow Apostles preacht, only they gave them a better understand-

ing of it than what they had received; they had received the literal notion, but they would tell them a more spiritual or full understanding of it: even so here he doth not say, only *the most holy faith*, but *your most holy faith*; to signifie that the faith and Doctrine they had received and as yet retained was the most holy faith and compleat doctrine. Such as *would build them up to the inheritance*, as to that purpose Paul told the Elders at Ephesus, *Act. 20. 32.* and therefore no need for them to listen too or tamper with any additions to, or pretended perfectings of the faith by any false Teachers.

4. To imply and signifie to them, that this Faith or Doctrine is not to be professed with an unholy, unclean or prophane heart or practise; it comes to require and effect the most perfect holiness in them that receive and profess it, otherwise it is received and professed in vain, and to no good purpose. Let every one that names the Name of Christ depart from iniquity, sayes God, as a seal of the holiness and sureness of his foundation that he hath laid in *Sion* for us, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* and therefore all those filthy practises of the false Teachers and their followers, mentioned and reprov'd in this Epistle, are to be fled from and avoided by the believers and confessors of the Name and Faith of Jesus, as most unsuitable to the purity and cleanness of the faith professed by them, and most unbecoming them and their profession; suitable to that charge given prophetically in *Isai. 52. 11.* Depart ye, depart ye, (namely, from *Babylon*, the World, or pollutions of the worldly Church) go ye out from thence, *touch no unclean*

unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord: With which agrees that in 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. and 7. 1. Come out from amongst them, and be ye separated (namely, from the pollutions of the world unto God) and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you, &c. as also all those many exhortations, to walk worthy of God, and of his call, wherewith he hath called us to his Kingdom and glory, and to let our conversations be such as become the Gospel, that as he who hath called us is holy, so we may be holy in all manner of conversation; and that as the Gospel and Faith we are called to, and profess is the most holy, clean and pure faith, so we also may be the most holy, clean and pure peculiar people to God, Denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, Ephes. 4. 1, 2. Philip. 1. 27. Peter 1. 15, 16, 17. and 2. 9, 10. Titus 2. 11, 12, 13, 14.

5. To imply and signifie the very exceeding great danger of either corrupting or departing from this faith, or dishonouring it by a contrary, an unholy and unclean conversation, or any way impugning or opposing it; for in saying it is most holy, he implies (as before) that it is most tenderly and carefully respected of God, so as he will by no means suffer it to be wronged or injured by any, either by persecuting it, he will surely retribute wrath to them that oppose it, and disturb his Servants in their profession of it. He that falls upon this stone shall be broken, but upon whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder; only where men do it in the ignorance of their unbelief,

lief, they may upon conviction and repentance
 find mercy, as Paul did, or by *corrupting it*, thence
the blackness of darkness is as the portion of those
 Teachers, who are as *wandering stars*, and abide
 not in the faith of the Truth; and their *heresies*
 are *damnable* and destructive, *They bring upon*
themselves swift destruction, as well as also they
 occasion the destruction of all that receive their
 doctrine and follow their pernicious wayes; or
 by *dishonouring it*, crucifying Christ to themselves,
 and putting him to an open shame, by their
 prophane, unclean, unrighteous conversation in
 and with the profession of it, which occasions
 God to cut men off from the faith, and give them
up to strong delusions, yea, and in a sort to send
them strong delusions, that they might believe a lye,
 and be damned, as in *2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.* or give
them up to all unrighteousness, to practice unclean-
 ness with greediness, and to do things most uncon-
 venient and dishonourable, and at last to destroy
 them everlastingly from his presence. The sins
 and evils men do, while ignorant of God and his
 Gospel, and before the profession of it, God can
 wink at, and upon sight of his Truth and Good-
 ness, men repenting thereof, he freely forgives;
 yea, and what men at unawares, and through some
 sudden and violent temptation, commit after:
 but if we sin willingly (or wilfully) after the
 knowledge of the truth received, if yet we go on in
 a course of sin and commit iniquity, that's most
 dangerous, and renders a mans condition worse
 than if he had never known the truth, provoking
 God more highly to execute vengeance and not
 spare, as in *Dent. 29. 18, 19, 20, 21. Heb. 10.*

25, 26, 29. whence that Caution Look diligently, least any man fail of the grace of God, least any root of bitterness spring up and trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; least there be any fornicator or prophane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right; for ye know how afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears; for ye are not come to Mount Sinai, the Mount which might be touched, and which burnt with fire, &c. but ye are come to Mount Sion, the City of the living God, &c. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him who spake on earth, how shall we escape if we turn from him that speaks from heaven? Heb. 12. 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 25. Where the Apostle from the heavenliness, and so by consequence the holiness and graciousness of the Gospel ministration, warns us to take heed of all prophaneness, and implies the severity of Gods judgments against the prophaners of it, and the turners of the Grace of God into wantonness: The more the Grace of God is set before us in any Doctrine, the more it teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and ingages to holiness in heart and life.

Now the Grace of God is most fully set forth in the Gospel, as now since the ascension of Christ published to all Nations for the obedience of faith, and therefore as it is the most gracious, so upon that account the most holy faith, but now where God bestows most grace, he expects most holiness in return for it, and therefore there he is most displeased with mens unholiness, and ungraciousness,

ness, especially, when that that is given to produce holiness, is made use of to encourage men to looseness and prophaneness; *The more holy any thing is, the more severely the abuse of it is punished by him:* (as might be seen in Gods punishing Belshazzar's abuse of the consecrated Vessels of the Temple of God to drink and quaff in prophanely, amongst his Queens and Concubines, *Dan. 5.*) therefore this being the most holy faith, the abuses and prophanations of it shall be most severely punished.

The use of all which might be to provoke us to carefulness in keeping to and holding fast this faith, not suffering it to be perverted or prophaned; and especially to take heed of perverting and prophaning it our selves, as we would avoid Gods sorest and severest judgments, but receive it with all gladness and acceptation, and wait upon it, and upon God in it, for his power to sanctifie us and make us holy; and as God is working in it to that purpose, *both to will and to do, so work we out*, what God works in us, and so *our own salvation with fear and trembling*, least we should receive his Grace in vain, withhold it in unrighteousness, or turn it into wantonness.

But I pass on to the next particular to be inquired into, *viz.*

4. What that is that is to be built upon or with this most holy faith, and that is *your selves.*

1. Not

1. Not the faith it self, that is not to be built up, for that is already perfect and pure, most holy, it cannot be mended or made better, every addition to it, or alteration of it mars it and prophanes it, that therefore is to be believed, received and let abide, as it is laid of God for us, both in the things done to the person of Christ, and in the Doctrine and declaration of Christ by the Apostles and Prophets; that's the foundation of the building, and it is perfectly laid of God already, *Isai. 28. 16. 1 Cor. 3. 11.* that is not to be built up, but to be built upon, to be held fast as most absolute and compleat, nothing therein to be removed or altered, that stands firm and sure, and hath this seal, *The Lord knoweth those that are his;* the Lord like, owns and approves it highly as it is his, which he would not do if it was defective and imperfect; he found fault with the first Covenant, Priesthood, Sacrifices, &c. upon the account of their defectiveness for making perfect the worshippers, and therefore cast them by in due time, took them away to bring in this New Testament, the most holy Faith, the most perfect and acceptable Sacrifices, and most perfect Priest, *To whom he hath therefore sworn, and will not repent and alter it,* as he did the former Priesthood and Law. *Thou art a Priest to me for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck, Heb. 7. 11, 12, 19, 21. and 8. 7, 8, 9, 13. and 10. 9.* All is compleat and most holy here in this faith; that therefore is not the thing he exhorts them to build or add to, as the false Teachers were wont to do, or pretend to do, to make the Doctrine taught by the Apostles more full and perfect by their additions, by which
they

they corrupted it: But letting that lye as God had laid it, he exhorts them to build up.

2. Themselves, their persons, hearts, hopes, &c. therein implying,

1. That Believers are Gods building, as the Apostle calls them in 1 Cor. 3. 9. Those that receive this most holy Faith, they are thereby united with Christ, the precious, sure foundation and corner stone, and so as living or lively stones ~~in-~~livened by that living Stone Christ, to whom they are come, *They grow up into an holy spiritual house, an holy Temple and habitation for God by his Spirit*: Yea, as Christ is both the House and Temple of God himself (*For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*) and the foundation also of the House or Church of God; so every Believer is both as the Temple of God, by vertue of Christ in whom he is (yea, their body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost) and is also a stone in the great Temple or spiritual building, and as God dwelt of old in his Temple of old at *Jerusalem*, between the Cherubims of glory, not as to the comprehension of his Essence or Glory, but as to a signal and more especial manifestation of his Power and Presence; so God dwells in his Church and People that are in Christ, by way not of the comprehension of his Essence, but manifestation of his gracious presence and dispensation of his blessings. Christ, as held forth in the Apostles Doctrine, is the only foundation of this building. He is laid or built upon none of them, or their vertues, works or doings, but they are all brought to and built upon him by the holy Spirit.

And

And therefore also they ought carefully to cleave to Christ as their only Foundation, their Upholder and Sanctifier, by vertue of whose firmness and infinite strength and fixedness, all they that abide or continue upon, or in the faith of him, are firm and strong also, yea, *As Mount Sion that can never be removed, but standeth fast for ever*, Psal. 115. 1, 2. and by vertue of his holiness and sanctity, being Gods holy foundation, they are holy too to God, as an holy Temple or building, and therefore ought also to be clean, and chaste, and holy in all things to him, as he that hath appointed it for his habitation and dwells therein, is holy.

2. In that the Believers are the matter to be built upon that most holy Faith, it is implied too, that they yet are imperfect and not compleat in themselves, or in their conformity to Christ, and attainments from Christ; their faith is most holy, no blemish, or imperfection, or defect in that, but they that are in or upon it are not so; they need to be builded up and perfected; they may, yea, its but meet and right that they should acknowledge their own shortness in holiness or goodness, that so they may attend to grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but they may not fault the faith once delivered to the Saints, or accuse it of want or defect, or bear that it be faulted, added to or altered; they are to let that alone as it is in that respect, but attend, that they themselves may be added to in their believing, living righteously, godly and soberly in this present evil world, though they be compleat in Christ their Head,
Root

Root and Foundation, *Col. 2. 10.* yet in their attainments of the knowledge of Christ, and conformity to him in holiness and happiness, they have not yet attained, neither are already perfect, as the Apostle sayes of himself, *Philip. 3. 14, 15.* They see but darkly, and as in a glass, not so as they are seen; they know but in part, and prophecy but in part; that that is perfect in those respects is not yet come, but to be waited for by them, *1 Cor. 13. 9, 11.* they may yet and ought to add in their faith vertue, and in vertue knowledge, and in knowledge temperance; and in temperance patience, and in patience godliness, and in godliness brotherly kindness, and in brotherly kindness charity, *2 Peter 1. 5, 6, 7.* It will do us no hurt to acknowledge our own shortness and imperfection in our attainments, so we also acknowledge the fulness and perfection of the most holy faith, for perfecting us, and bringing us to the inheritance: yea, as it is dangerous for Believers, and leads to their destruction, to admit an imperfection and defect in the faith; for that will lay them open to impostures to corrupt them therefrom; so not to acknowledge their own imperfection and defect, to say they have no sin, or have attained all fulness of knowledge and goodness, or with the Church of *Laodicea*, that They are rich, and increased with goods, and need nothing, is very dangerous and destructive to them also, laying them open to pride and puffings up in themselves, as also to slothfulness, covetousness and security, and by that means, to fail of the Grace of God, and to be deluded and carried captive of Satan to their own destruction. It implies further.

3. That

3. That their perfection in conformity to Christ, and attainments by Christ, is to be sought for in abiding in their most holy Faith, and so by and from it, as it signifies the object or foundation of it, which is Christ; and by and through the the faith, as it signifies the Doctrine holding forth Christ. They are not to seek further growth and perfection by going away from that to some other doctrine as better fitted for that purpose, for then should not this be the most holy faith, but that other doctrine should be more holy than this; nor should they build up themselves thereon; but besides this, as quitting and forsaking this, that they might be built up, or build up themselves on some other thing: but here they are to continue holding fast that which they have heard and received. And to that purpose it is that the Apostle being about to leave the Elders of Ephesus and the Churches thereabout, commits them to God, and to the word of his Grace, as able to build them up, and to give them the inheritance, Act. 20: 32. and tells the Corinthians, that they should be saved in keeping in memory what they had received in the Gospel preached by him from the beginning, or in the first things of it, 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2, 3. and 1. 22, 23. So the Apostle John too, 1 John 2. 24, 25. for this doctrine is not like that of the Law of first Testament, that made nothing perfect, but perfection is herein and herethrough to be attained, so far as we be capable of attaining it here; yea, to the inheritance it self, also it is onely Christ as herein set forth that doth bring men. The Doctrine then or faith once delivered to the Saints, is not at any time to be waved, or altered

by us, but suffered to abide, and to be abid in by us; and on that Believers are to build up themselves, who are yet in themselves imperfect, & stand in need of building. Its the foundation laid for them that upholds them and bears them up from sinking; all their faith, hope, stay, comfort springs therefrom and stands thereupon; but it self stands upon none of them, nor is added to or made more holy by them, yea, they themselves as to their Spirits and spiritual conditions stand upon it; are what they are, as a Building for God from and by it, and in union with it; and besides, that there is no standing for them or any man; nothing to support, relieve or comfort them against the accusations of the Law, and sin, and Sathan, nothing else to secure them and keep them from perishing in the wrath to come; no other Sacrifice for sins to be found but what this presents, nor otherwise than as this presents, and therefore no forgiveness, justification or salvation, but upon and according to this faith and doctrine. All the blessing and fulness of God is here dwelling, and sure to be met with by those that there seek and wait for him; and nothing but lies and emptiness can any finde to uphold them, if this be turned from. No work or worth, no prayers or tears or acts of a man can help him that hath rejected and is besides this foundation; all the Building therefore is to be on this: but then its to be inquired:

5. How the believer is to be built thereupon, and how to build up himself, and what that implies? to which we may say,

1. The building themselves upon this, is the firming

firming themselves in the belief and acknowledgment of this most holy faith; a growing more into it, and in union with it, more to believe it, and discern and see into the truth, fulness, and abundance in it, more to love it, and adhere to it, as having all things of worth and excellencie in it, and as thence seeking and expecting them: and then,

2. The deriving vertue from it, strength, courage, fortitude, patience, and so the divine vertues in it to an increase and augmentation in all holiness, and conformity to Christ; and so an ascending up, or mounting up more heaven-ward and God-ward, in affections to him, and hope and confidence in him, and so a growth in fitness for his service, and for the injoyment of the promised inheritance, and so for his inhabiting and dwelling in us and with us by his Holy Spirit, and filling us with his Glory and glorious vertues.

3. Yea, and as the believers are a society amongst themselves in union with Christ, and with one another by vertue of the common faith and salvation: so this building up themselves, or their being built up hath in it a joynt growth in the knowledge and faith of Christ and of the Grace of God in Christ, and firmness in their adherence to Christ and dependance on him, and in love one to another; and so a growth in union and affection one with another, and by that which every joint supplies from the head, and every stone, from the foundation, or Holy Faith, a growth up into God, into the knowledge and love of him, confidence in him, conformity to him, fitness for fellowship with

with him, and the inhabitation of him by his Spirit in them, and the injoyment of his Glory with and amongst them. And all through and by vertue of the foundation and corner stone Jesus Christ, in whom all the building fitly compacted and framed together groweth up into an holy Temple in the Lord, for an habitation of God, by (or in) his Spirit, *Ephes. 2. 21, 22.*

To which we may add also :

1. The multiplying themselves by the daily addition of others from the world into unity of faith and confession with them : for as there is an inward increase and growth of every particular believer in faith, love, holiness, &c. in this building up ; and a joynt inward encrease of the whole Society by that which is imparted amongst themselves to each other in the same heavenly virtues and attainments, so there is also an external and outward growth as to number and greatness of the society, while others are daily added to them : which makes the House of God grow larger in its latitude it hath in the world ; a way of growth that believers have heartily desired after and rejoyced in when they have obtained it ; a blessing included in the blessing of *Abraham*, wherein God promised to multiply and increase him and his seed, *Heb. 6. 14.* not only as his natural, but also as to his spiritual seed, the great thing that the Apostle *Paul* endeavored, not pleasing himself, but becoming all things to all men, and pleasing them in all things, not seeking his own profit but the profit of many that might be saved, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* And it was the thing that *David* was

better

better pleas'd with & more rejoyc'd in, to hear *my say who will shew us good?* Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, than if he had seen them prosper in the world in their wealth and riches, for thereupon he adds, *Thou hast put more joy and gladness into my heart* (namely, for, or concerning those that said as above) *than when their corn and their vine increased*, Psal. 4. 6, 7, and therefore it may well be included in this edifying themselves here exhorted to, viz. the endeavouring to adde and increase the number of believers by new conversions of others to the faith to partake with them in the Grace of God, as well as to increase and further themselves and one another in their inward growth upon the faith, especially too, seeing that the exercise of our selves in charity to seek the conversion and salvation of others, is a way in which God will add his blessing to, and enlarge our selves; as it is said, *The liberal Soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*, Pro. 11. 25, which as well respects the helpfulness of others spiritual instruction, as by distribution of worldly goods, for the relief of mens outward necessities.

6. Now in that it is said, Build ye up your selves on your most holy faith, and not only passively, being built up upon it, it is further signified both
 1. That as the believers are not yet perfect or most holy, as the foundation or faith is; so their growth up to perfection is gradual, not all at once attained, or in a moment but by degrees, in which they may be daily and always growing more and more: for this counsel or exhortation is for a continued usefulness, a business that they

are always to look upon as their business, till they be brought to the actual possession of eternal life, or so long as they live here amongst men in the world. There is in this growth up into an holy Temple for the Lord, *a going on from strength to strength*, Psal. 84. 7, 8. *a being changed into the image of the Lord, from Glory to Glory, as by his Spirit*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. so that believers may not at any time say, we are edified & built up so fully already that we can build up our selves or be built up no further; though they are to be at a stay in respect of their foundation, the holy faith they are not to straggle from that, yet as to their knowledge of it, and faith in it, and attainments from it, they may say as the Apostle Paul of himself, that they have not yet attained, while here, neither are already perfect: but this thing they do, forgetting the things that are behinde (the things they have let go for Christ) they press on forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus: and to press forward still every day more and more, that they may apprehend that, for which they are also apprehended of Christ Jesus, Philip. 3. 12; 13; 14. and so as the Apostle says to the Thessalonians, edifie themselves still, even as they do, 1 Theff. 5. 11. they did edifie one another, and yet he exhorts them still to do so; there is ground for it, there is need of it; for as our Saviour says, *So is the Kingdome of God, (the Grace of God in mens Souls in respect of the efficacie of it there) as when a man casts seed upon the earth, and he sleeps and wakes night and day, and the seed grows up and is increased no man knows how, for the Earth of its*

own

own accord brings forth fruit; first the blade, and
 then the ear, and then the full Corn in the ear, &c.
 Mark 4. 26, 27, that is, the growth of the Grace
 of God in a man, or of a man in that Grace is se-
 cretely, indiscernably, and leasurely, not alto-
 gether, and at once, but by divers steps and de-
 grees; so that neither is any man to be discoura-
 ged, if he do not sensibly feel or perceive his
 growth in Grace, or that others so grow, but to
 go on edifying and furthering himself and others
 therein, in time *their profiting will appear to all*
men. Nor are they to put a stop to their standing
 in the earth, the Holy faith, or to their growth
 therein, but still go on and abide riping and build-
 ing, and building up themselves till the Husband-
 man when he sees them fully ripe (as follows in
 that Parable ver. 29.) *when the fruit yeelds forth*
it self, or is brought forth, straitways puts in his
sickle because the harvest is come, that is, till Christ
 take us away by death, we are to abide and grow.
 That's one thing implied: and then,

2. That this building up or edifying on the
 most holy faith, is a thing to which the believer is
 to be active not passive only. It's a work in some
 sense put upon and required of the believer, not
 so to be wrought in & upon them, as the building
 of a temple of wood and stones is a work wrought
 upon it, so as it contributes nothing therto by way
 of action, only is built up, but builds not it self: both
 phrases are used of believers, they are *built up*, says
 Eph. 2. 21, 22. Col. 2. 7. and yet also are said to
 edifie, & willed to *build up themselves*, as here, and
 in 1 Thess 5. 11. The former, because believers have

not power and sufficiencie of themselves, as of themselves to build up themselves for God, more than to bring themselves to God; but their sufficiencie is of God, 2 Cor. 3. 5. and it is he that worketh in them to will & to do of his good pleasure; they are in that sense also Gods Building; not onely built for God, but built of God too: The Sanctuary that God hath pitched, and not man, and yet the latter phrase of edifying and building up themselves and each other is also used; because they are not dead stones, like the stones in Solomons Temple of old that had neither life nor motion in them, but by vertue of Christ the living stone, to whom they in believing are come, they are made living stones that have life and motion in them; not only natural as men, but also spiritual and divine as Believers in, and partakers of the life and Spirit of Christ, and therefore are capable of receiving and obeying exhortation and of acting spiritual things; yea, are inabled by the Grace of God to what he requires of them, 1 Pet. 2, 3, 4, 5. And God who gives them his Spirit to inliven and impower them to holy and good actions, gives them it not to be idle in them, or that they should be idle in or with it; but living in the Spirit, he would have them walk in the Spirit too, & do the works that his Spirit requires of them and leads them to: the working out their own salvation, and not being therefore secure and slothful, because it is God that is working in them to will and to do. It is the Believers work then in the help and strength, motive and motion of the Grace of God, to edifie and build up themselves. And it is the

the work of God and his Spirit, power, and strength in the obeying him, to build them up too. And in their doing in his power and strength what he requires of them, and moves and inclines them too, he also will not fail to do all his good work in them, so as they shall be built up and prepared for an habitation for him by his Holy Spirit. Now that which they are to doe in the helpfulness and operation of Gods Grace in them for edifying themselves and each other, is;

1. Diligently to heed and minde the most Holy faith, on which they are built and have their standing, exercising themselves and provoking one another to consider it, and all that is in it, as it is discovered to and set before them, taking heed to those things which they heard and learned therein; and to *draw waters out of those wells of salvation*; even to suck and receive that nourishment in faith, and encouragement to hope and love and live upon and unto God that it presents to them feeding upon the words of life, and Christ crucified as set forth therein; and receiving in the sweetness, strength, & vertue therof afforded. *Considering Jesus Christ the Great high Priest and Apostle of our Profession* both in his Person and that dignity and greatness of it, that he is the Son, the only begotten Son of God, who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God; and as to his undertakings and performances in what he hath already done for us, as that he accepted and undertook to doe the will of God for ransoming us from that wretched state of sin and death, and therein of slavery

slavery to Sathan that we by our sin had plunged our selves into, and to that purpose abased himself to be made flesh for us, partaker with us in flesh and blood, made of a woman, and made under the Law for us, that the curse of the Law might fall upon him for us, as also it did, to the death of the Cross, wherein he bare our sins on the tree, and died for us, the just for us unjust, that he might bring us to God: so making peace for us by the blood of his Cross, and ransoming us from under the Law and Curse, to be under his own gracious Government and dispose, who also in the vertues of his sufferings and Sacrifice, is able and ready to save to the utmost from all our following sins, even against his Grace and goodness, all that see and confess them and turn from them, and so doe come unto God by him, and so from all dangers and inflictions of wrath and judgement, and be the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him; who being now raised from the dead, and ascended and sit down on the right hand of Majesty in the highest, is made Lord and Christ, the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, Thrones, Dominions, Principallities and Powers being put under him, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him. And he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; one in whom all these things are for us, so as in believing in him to become ours and to be enjoyed by us: the Great Prophet anointed of God and filled with his quickning Spirit, to give forth light and bring forth judgement to the Gentiles; able so to speak as to cause the dead to hear, and in hearing to live, able to

open

open the eyes of the blind, and cause the simple to understand knowledge, and guide the Believer into all truth; as he is also appointed of God, and hath promised to do. The great High-Priest that hath offered up the acceptable Sacrifice by which he hath made an atonement for our sins, and in the virtue of which he is become the propitiation for our sins, even for the whole world; and now ever lives to make intercession for, &c. be the Advocate of all those that come unto God by him. The great ruler & disposer of all things, and the protector and Defence of all those that believe in and obey him, the Judge of quick and dead, who shall raise all men out of their Graves, and bring them before him to receive of him according to their works; everlastingly rewarding with eternal life and Glory all those that submit to and serve him; and everlastingly destroying all their enemies, so as they never be able more to oppose or trouble them. A merciful High-Priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and temptations, while yet we are under the vexations of Enemies, and one that will most faithfully see to us, and accomplish all things for and about us that may conduce to our preservation and safety here, while under tryals; and to our eternal happiness, when fully freed from them.

The considering and minding him and the testimony of God concerning him, as also what it it says and testifies of us, our vileness, sinfulness, helplessness and misery in ourselves, and of our welfare and happiness in him, as founded in him, and what it testifies of the world, of sin, of righteousness, of life, death, &c. with all the

the Heavenly instructions, reproofs and consolations of it, is one, yea, the chief way of edifying our selves on our most holy faith, while we therein and therethrough draw vertue from Christ (as the poor woman by touching his garments) to the nourishing and strengthening our Soules to trust in him, love him, cleave to him and obey him; And so to oppose and stand against the assaults, of Satan, evils of the world, lusts of the flesh, or whatsoever might endeavour to allure or affright us from him, yea, and deriye all Heavenly Grace and vertue from him, to the enlarging our Souls towards him, and fitting them for and filling them with every good thing. Therefore the Holy Ghost in the Scripture is so frequent in commending to us, and provoking us to the study, mindfulness and meditation of the Law and Doctrine of the Lord, the Gospel of our salvation, pronouncing that man happy and blessed that delights himself therein, and gives up himself thereto. As also the minding others of it, and of the instructions, reproofs, and consolations of it, is the way to edifie them also, both by removing the rubbish that hinders their close cleaving to Christ the foundation, and more firmly cementing them to, and uniting them with Christ, through his love and goodness discovered to them and put to their mindes, and more firmly joyning them through the same love one to another, and furthering their hope in and conformity to God and Christ, in which they are edified and built up for him. And as a furtherance also hereto, a further means and way is,

2. A diligent and faithful exercise of their spiritual

ritual gifts for the helpfulness of each other; for *the manifestation of the Spirit* (some useful gift or other in which the Holy Spirit manifests his presence and influence, and whereby he fits each member of Christ for the good of the whole Body) *is given to every one* (namely of the Members of Christ) *to profit with*, 1 Cor. 12: 7. that is, to do good too, and edifie the Church or body of Christ with, as to *one is given by the Spirit a word of wisdom*, for directing and counselling what is best in doubtful matters, to *another a word of knowledge*, to inform mens minds of the things of God, and nature of his Creatures, works, Providences, &c. To *another faith*, a gift of believing and trusting in God more eminently; or of encouraging to faith and confidence, or also of faithfulness in keeping secret things committed to them, not divulging the temptations, failings, and miscarriages of others imparted to them. To *another the gifts of healings*, either of the inward wounds and distempers of the Spirit, or of bodily diseases by a miraculous way. To *another the working of Miracles*, or operations and efficacies of powers or powerful things; such as the inflicting diseases, deaths or such sad punishments upon men, as when the Apostle Peter inflicted death upon *Ananias* and *Saphirah* at his word, *Act. 5*, and *Paul* blindness on *Bar-jesus* the Sorcerer in *Act. 13. 10, 11*. as also the casting out Devils or the like. To *another prophecie*, either the fore-telling things to come, as *Agabus* did, *Acts 11. 28*. or the opening and unfolding Doctrine and speaking out of the Scriptures, to exhortation, edification and comfort, 1 Cor. 14. 3. To *another the discerning of Spi-*
rits

first, the discerning the Doctrines of men though
 never so craftily counterfeiting the truth, or
 discerning mens tempers and dispositions,
 whereby they are fit to admonish and warn their
 Brethren of what may harm them, or of persons
 not safe for them to trust. To another diversity of
 Tongues. To another a gift of Interpreting Languages.
 Divers gifts from one and the same Spirit of
 Christ, distributing to every one according as he
 pleases: but all given for the helpfulness and pro-
 fit of the Church, and therefore also to be to that
 purpose exercised, as the Apostles also instruct
 and teach, as in 1 Pet. 4. 10. every one as he hath
 received the gift, so let him minister one towards an-
 other as good stewards of the manifold (or various)
 Graces of God. So in Rom. 12. 6, 7. Having
 gifts differing according to the Grace that is given
 unto us, whether prophesie, let us prophesie according
 to the proportion of faith, or ministry, let us wait on
 our ministry (as Joshua on his ministering to Mo-
 ses, Exod. 24. 13. and John to Paul and Barnabas,
 Act. 13. 5.) or he that teacheth on teaching, or he
 that exhorteth on exhortation, &c. surely in such
 exercising their spiritual gifts and employing and
 improving their Talents, they may be useful and
 helpful for edifying themselves and one another:
 for while they are faithful in doing good with
 what they have received and are trusted with,
 God gives his blessing with them, and increases
 them themselves, the liberal Soul here shall be made
 fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also him-
 self, and he shall profit and edifie others also: as
 the Apostle exhorting Timothy to take heed to
 himself and his ministry, and to continue in them,

tells

tells him, so should he save himself, and them that heard him: adde,

3. A walking in Charity, for knowledge (without that) *puffs up*, but Charity edifies, 1 Cor 8. 2, 3. that's the most profitable way, the Grace or vertue that will lead us to be most useful and edifying to others; for that will lead us to be ready at all times to exercise our gifts, and improve our Talents for the good of others, and to mind their concerns and what may further their happiness, and not to look on our own things onely. Charity suffers long from others, before it will be tired out, or suffer him, in whom it is, to turn away from seeking their good: and is kind in the mean time, free to do good to others, while it suffers great indignities and abuses long from them. It envies not others good, nor the imparting our gifts to others for their good. Doth not vaunt it self, nor is puffed up, to the grieving and discouraging the neighbour, or despising his meaner condition and worth. Doth not behave it self unseemly to offend and stumble the weak Brother, and to turn him out from God. Seeketh not her own, but the good of others. Is not easily provoked against another, or to leave off pursuing his good and benefit. Thinks not (or surmises not) evil. Nay, if it discern evil, it is willing to pass it by, and not impute it to the withdrawing his good offices of love from his neighbour. Rejoiceth not in Iniquity (harm, evil, or deceit) but rejoiceth in the truth; and therefore also endeavours the prosperity and spreading thereof, that the mouth of iniquity might be stopped. Beareth all things, all burthens put upon it. Believeth all things

things that God hath discovered, and that he hath any ground to believe concerning the good of others. *Hopes all things* that may further their good; and *endures all things* that it meets with for exercise of its patience, 1 Cor. 13. 4; 5, 6, 7. this will lead us to deny our selves and our own things to do others good, and so to use our liberties in things indifferent, as may tend to the good and profit of others, and forbear the use of it where it might prejudice them; as S. Paul who would not eat flesh or drink wine till the world stood, or do any thing whereby the Brother should be offended: if he knew such things would offend him, weaken him in, or stumble him from the truth, 1 Cor. 8. 13. with Rom. 14. 21. this will lead men to doe all things for edification and nothing for destruction to any; this therefore is a most useful way of edifying and building up one another in the most holy faith.

4. And in a word, the walking as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and so the shewing forth his virtues in our conversations, in an innocent abstinence from all ungodlines & fleshly & worldly lusts, & walking soberly, & righteously, and godly in this present World, and in a patient bearing and suffering, and so overcoming with goodness all the injuries and abuses done to us, especially for the Gospels sake, for that also tends exceedingly to the furtherance of the Gospel, and the confirming and strengthening one another in the belief and confession thereof. Philip. 1. 12, 13, 14, 20, 27. After such a sort are we to build up our selves, and one another on our most Holy Faith.

Now

Now such a building up our selves thereon, tends to keep us in the love of God, because,

1. They that build up themselves thereon, keep or abide thereon, and are not waved or turned aside from that precious foundation, to which the love, special respect, care, and approbation of God are as it were intailed. Christ is the first, prime, and immediate object of Gods delightful love; so that a man being and abiding in him doth in, through and by vertue of him abide also in his love. Now a building up our selves on that foundation, is a firming us more in and fastning us more upon him, who is that foundation whereon his love is inseparably placed. *The foundation of God (Jesus Christ as held forth in the Apostles Doctrine, for other foundations can no man lay) is a firm and sure foundation, and standeth sure, having this Seal (or confirmation) the Lord knoweth them that are his.* It is known of God as his, and therefore cared for, owned, and loved by him; and all that are his (the foundations or Christs) are therefore also known, owned, and accepted of God. *If Christs, then Abrahams seed and heirs according to promise, &c. Gal. 3. 29.*

2. The building up our selves on that foundation, the most holy faith, is the way to keep our selves untouched of the adversaries of it; and

3. To do Gods Commandments, using our gifts & talents to those ends & intents to which God hath given us them, and as he hath given us Commandments, and in this way he hath promised his presence, and blessing with us, and favour towards us. *If we have Christs Commandments and keep them (as we doe in thus doing) then are we lovers*

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of

of Christ, and God will love us and Christ will love us, & manifest his own self to us, John 14. 21. & If we keep his Commandments we shall continue in his love, John 15. 10. If we do these things (adde in our faith vertue, &c & so edifie and build up our selves on our most holy faith) we shall never fall, for so an abundant entrance shall be administred to us into the everlasting Kingdome of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10, 11. It is the idle Soul shall suffer hunger; the barren and fruitless branch that the husband-man takes away, not the diligent and fruitful in good works, Job 15. 2. This therefore is the way for us to keep our selves in the love of God. Not to be careless and secure, and say in our hearts we cannot miscarry; our standing depends not on our working and diligence, and therefore we will do nothing but give up our selves to minde and walk after the flesh, and do our own pleasures; for we are sure of eternal life, nothing can deprive us, Christ will keep it for us, and give it to us what ever we do, having closed with him and believed on him, no sin of ours can un-son us, nor no carelessness or neglect of ours provoke God to neglect us. Take we heed of such abusive reasonings and actings, and exercise we our selves to Godliness, to build up our selves on our most holy faith. (for through slothfulness & negligence the house may else drop through) so will God be with us, love us, own and delight in us to dwell with and amongst us: But then add we still the second way or means of keeping our selves in the love of God, which is also to be practised all along together with the former, and not after we have done with that, for that is never to be done

done with while here, but always to be practised, and so is this second too : namely,

2. Praying in the Holy Ghost. Where we have to consider :

1. The exercise it self, & that is praying. 2. The way or manner of it, & that is, in the Holy Ghost.

In speaking unto which let us inquire into and consider :

1. What it is to pray.

2. What it is to pray in the Holy Ghost.

3. What is implied in the exhorting Believers so to pray.

4. How that conduces to the keeping themselves in the love of God.

1. And first. To pray is more than to say, or read or frame a prayer, for that may be as to the two former, an exercise of the tongue and lips, in which the heart may be altogether unexercised, yea, and it may be other mens desires or needs that we say or read over and not our own. And as to the last expression, the framing of a prayer it may be but an exercise of the brain & parts, not of the heart and Spirit of a man; yea, the Stage-Players have done all this in derision of prayer sometime; whereas to pray is,

To exercise the heart in minding, uttering, or pouring out unto God through Jesus Christ its needs and desires, or the needs of and its desires for others : let us view the particulars; and so,

1. Prayer is an exercise of the heart, thence, *When God said, seek ye my face, my heart (says David) said, thy face, Lord, will I seek.* Psa. 27.9. and a man is said in prayer to pour out his heart, as in Psa. 62.

8. *Trust in God at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts unto him : He is a refuge for us : So 2 Sam.*

7. 17. David says, *He found in his heart to pray this prayer to God.* It is true, the heart may be exercised in reading or saying a prayer, so as to joyn in the words of it heartily, as what it sees, it needs and desires ~~be~~, and the exercise of the heart, so in reading or saying a prayer may be and is a praying: but whether men read or say, or frame and compose prayers by their parts, if their hearts be not engaged therein, but onely their lips and tongue or brains, its nota praying, there may be the carcass or form of a prayer, but the inside of it is wanting, and its but a dead image. But when the heart is exercised, though there be nothing read or said outwardly and audibly to the ear of man, yet it may be a right and fervent praying, as in the case of *Hannab*, 1 Sam. 1. 13. *who spake in her heart, and only her lips moved*; the heart may do well enough in prayer without the voice of the lips and tongue, but they without it signifie nothing in Gods reckonings. *Its a vain worship when men draw nigh to God with the lips, and honour him with the tongue, but the heart is removed far from him*, Isa. 29. 17. Its an exercise of the heart, that's the first thing.

2. Its an exercise of the heart, in which the heart minds the needs of itself or others; indeed this alone may be without praying, but yet praying cannot be without this in one branch of it, as it is for it self, it mindes its own needs or wants, and as it is for others, it mindes their needs, either more generally, or in particular, for there can be no hearty desire of supplies where there is no heart-minding of the needs to be supplied. The heart first gathers and takes into it self by its consideration or mindfulness, the needs to be supplied before it,

can

can pour them out in expressing them to God, or desiring supplies for them. And this is one thing in the preparation of the heart to pray to God, mentioned *Psal.* 10. 19. that God brings to minde, and makes it sensible and apprehensive of the needs or wants of it self or others, and helps it to consider or lay them to heart : an inconsiderate heart can never be a good praying heart, thence also *Solomon* thus expresses himself, 2 *Chron.* 6. 37. *If they shall bethink themselves ——— and turn and pray, &c.* yea, thence also prayer is sometime called a *Meditation of the heart*, as in *Psal.* 5. 1. *Consider my Meditation.* That's the second.

3. It's an exercise of the heart uttering and pouring out its needs, which it may doe either by the mouth and lips, also employed, as, *hear the prayer that proceeds not out of feigned lips*, 17. 1. and again, *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.* And, *I cried unto God with my voice unto God with my voice did I cry,* &c. *Psal.* 66. 17. and 77. 1. or it may be without the voice, as was noted above of *Hannah*, for the heart hath a secret speech and cry too, audible to God, when yet men hear nothing thereof. But whether with audible voice or without, this pouring out or uttering the needs from or by the heart is essential to prayer; which therefore is called *the pouring-out of the heart*, as *Psal.* 62. 8. before noted, and *the pouring out of the Soul*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. or, *of the complaint*, *Psal.* 142. 2.

4. It is an uttering the needs and desires of the heart, and that's it which most properly renders

it prayer, the breathing forth desires by way of petition, request, or humble supplication for the supply of our needs. It is not only this I need or want which may be without prayer properly so called; But, Lord, give or grant me this, or that the need whereof I am sensible of, as in *Solomons* prayer for Wisdome, 1 *King*. 3. 7, 8. O Lord my God, Thou hast made me thy servant King in stead of David my Father, and I am but a little Child, I know not how to go out or come in (there's the uttering his need, and then ver. 9.) Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, &c. So in *Psal*. 60. 11. Give us help from trouble for vain is the help of man: yea, sometimes the goodness of the thing may be more in the praying, begetting desires of it than simply the want of it, as he that asks a thing, that he hath tasted the sweetness of more out of delight in it, than need of it, thence prayer is exprest by asking, seeking, knocking, making known our requests, &c. as *Matth*. 7. 7, 8. *Philip*. 4. 6. It's an uttering or powring out desires, that's the fourth thing.

5. It's an exercise of the heart pouring out its needs and desires unto God, thats the praying here required, and to be spoken too; for though there may be prayers and petitions made to men, Kings, or Magistrates, or others, as in *Dan*. 8. 7. a Decree was made against asking a petition of any God or man, except of King Darius for thirty days space, and so we read of *Jeremiahs* presenting his supplication to the King, *Jerem*. 37. 20. and 38. 26. yea, and there were prayers made by the Heathens to their Idols, as is said *Isa*. 44. 17. He falleth down and worshippeth it, and prayeth to it,
and

and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God: yet these kinde of civill or Idolatrous prayers fall not under our consideration as prayers to which the Scripture exhorteth us: much less under the name and notion of prayer, as when it saith, *pray continually, pray without ceasing, watch unto prayer,* or the like. Its a Divine exercise of the heart, breathing forth the desires to God, the onely true God, as God hath said, *Call upon me in the time of trouble,* Psal. 50. 14. 15. *Let us goe and pray before the Lord,* Zech. 8. 21. He is the object to whom our prayers, desires, or requests are to be made known, &c. as *Philip. 4. 6. make your requests known unto God, &c.* It must be to God; that's the fifth particular.

6. Through Jesus Christ, as the Mediator of God and men, the way of approach to God. It is not God as absolutely in himself considered, and immediately lookt upon, that we are to direct our prayers to by our selves, but God as in Christ as he hath in him been *reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses*; and as he hath prepared in him for us by his Death and Sacrifice forgiveness of sins, and appointed him as the great High Priest to present our suits for us and render them acceptible to him, *making intercession for those that come unto God by him,* Heb. 7. 25. and 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. and 13. 15. whence our prayers are to be *in Christs Name*, as in *John 14. 13, 14. and 16. 23, 26.* though this may be more properly referred to the manner of praying here required, the praying in the Holy Ghost.

Lastly, I added the needs of or its desires for others, to signifie that this praying required is not to be limited or confined to our selves and our own needs and wants, and desires for our selves but extended to the praying for others also; here being no limitation of the subject to our selves in the Text, but it is only said, praying in the Holy Ghost; and it is praying, as well when we pray for others as when we pray for our selves; whether it be for all men, as *1 Tim. 2. 1.* or for some sorts of men onely, as for Kings and all in Authority, *ver. 2.* or for some particular Cities and people, as *Abraham* prayed for the Sodomites, or as *Samuel* prayed for Israel, as *Moses* also and *David* and *Solomon*, and others did, *Gen. 18. 23. Exod. 32. 11, 12, 13, 14. 1 Sam. 12. 23. 2 Sam. 24. 10, 17.* or for some particular persons, as *Moses* prayed for *Pharaoh*, *Exod. 8. 8, 9, 12, 29, 30. Elias* for the widow of *Sarephath* and her child, *1 King. 17. 20, 21.* the Church for *Peter*, *Act. 12. 5.* and the Churches for *Paul*, *Rom. 15. 30. Eph. 6. 19. Col. 4. 3.* or for enemies, as *Moses* for *Pharaoh*, and as *Christ* commands us in *Mat. 5. 44.* or for brethren, the Saints and Churches, as *Ephes. 6. 17.* supplication for all Saints.

Such is prayer as more strictly taken for Petition and request unto God, and so as it is distinguished from thanksgiving as oft they are distinctly mentiond, as *pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks, 1 Thes. 5. 17, 18.* So, *by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, Philip. 4. 6.* And so distinctly taken, it includes supplications, prayers or petitions, and intercessions,

intercessions, in 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. Supplications, humble confessions of our sins, and earnest deprecations of wrath and judgments, prayers or petitions, requests for favours, blessings, and good things, intercessions, interposings of our prayers for others, standing between them and judgement and pleading humbly with God for them: as *Moses* for *Israel*, *Abraham* for the *Sodomites*, &c. but when thanksgiving is not distinctly mentioned, the word (*prayer*) may include thanksgiving too, and so sure the word (*praying*) here may include thanksgiving also; and in such a large sense of the word to pray may take in somewhat more than in the description above given, namely, an exercise of the heart, or of the man speaking unto God by way of request and supplication, and by way of confession or thanksgiving in behalf of himself or others; but this consideration of thanksgiving in prayer may also be taken in under the manner of praying here expressed, *viz.* praying in the Holy Ghost, of which next. And so,

2. To pray in the Holy Ghost, or in the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God and Christ, which is a Spirit of Holiness dwelling and resting fully on Christ, and from him and God in him breathed forth in and with the most holy faith unto the heart of the believer; or breathing forth, witnessing and speaking of, and glorifying Christ to the Soul, taking the things of him and shewing them thereto, and therewith guiding it into Christ and the truth of Christ, sanctifying it to God, and framing it to his minde in all things) doth signify,

1. To

1. To pray or utter our desires and needs, or the needs of others in the light, direction or guidance of the Holy Spirit. Not as our own natural hearts, imaginations, or affections would lead, or as men by their wisdom and will might suggest unto us, but as he, the Holy Ghost instructs us; and that both,

1. As to the things to be prayed for, not such as the flesh and the wisdom and affections of it affect and move after, or the Spirit of this world, such as be riches, honours, pleasures of the flesh, few, el for our corruptions, evil to our enemies, &c. as the Gentiles seek after; and the carnal uncircumcised hearts of men delight in, such as *Solomon* requested not, *1 King 3.* — But,

1. Such things as Gods Name and Glory are concerned in, or that conduce to, &c are necessary for the manifesting and magnifying thereof, that the Gospel may have a free passage, *the word of God run and be glorified, 2 Thes. 3. 1. that his way may be known upon the earth, and his saving health amongst the Nations, Psal. 67. 1, 2, 3. and to that purpose, that God would send forth labourers into his harvest, Matth. 9. 38. and blest and prosper those he sends, giving them utterance so to speak the word and mystery of Christ as they ought; and deliverance from the hands of unreasonable and wicked men, 2 Col. 4. 3, 4. Eph. 6. 18. 2 Thess. 3. 1, 2. that he would blest and help his people, and make them blessings in the world Job. 17. Psal. 67. and 28. 10 and 132. 8, 9. giving them boldness and courage, &c. Act. 4. 29.*

2. Such as the coming and Kingdom of Christ is and includes, as, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly,*

Rev.

Rev. 22. 20. *Thy Kingdom come*, Matth. 6. 10. *Oh, that the salvation of Israel was come out of Sion*, Psal. 14. 8. *Remember the Children of Edom*, O Lord, &c. Psal. 137. 7. and so for *Babylons fall and ruine*, &c the hastening of the day of God, performance of his promises, that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and his will be done in earth as it is in Heaven, Matth. 6. 10, 11.

3. Such as the Kingdom of God and his righteousness now consists in to be granted to us or others, as wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of God and Christ, Prov. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. *If thou cryest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding*: Jam. 1. 3. *If any man want wisdom let him ask it of God*, &c. So the forgiveness of sins, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, Matth. 6. 12. *Cleanse me from my secret sins*, Psal. 19. 12. *Deliver me from all my transgressions, and make me not a reproach to the foolish*, Psal. 39. 8, 9. The Spirit of God as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, the guide into all truth, the Comforter, strengthner and sanctifier of the Soul: as Luc. 11. 13. Ephes. 1. 17, 18. John 14. 15, 16; 17. Ephes. 3. 16 &c. *Mercy, Grace, and peace from God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. 1. 2. 1 Tim. 1. 2. and 2 Tim. 1. 2. Psal. 85. 7. *victory over, and deliverance from corruption, and from Satan and his temptations*, Psal. 19. 13. *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins*, &c. *order my footsteps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me*, Psal. 119. 133. *Lead us not into temptation,*

tation, but deliver us from evil, Matth. 6. 13.

4. Such supplies for the necessities of this life, support and help under, or freedom, and deliverance from the troubles of it, and from the plots and malice of wicked men in the world against us, as be necessary for us, for our subsistence while here continued, or for our serving and glorifying God, and usefulness amongst men, as *Prov. 30. 8. Feed me with food convenient for me, Matth. 6. 11. Give us this day our daily bread. O, deliver me not into the will of mine enemies, Psal. 27. 14. Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man, and preserve me from the wicked man, which imagine mischief in their hearts, &c. Psal. 140. 1, 2. Pray that your flight be not in the winter nor on the Sabbath-day, Matth. 24. 20. and the like for others as for our selves, 2 Thess. 3. 1, 2.*

5. In particular wants, exercises and temptations for such things as the Holy Spirit knows to be most profitable for us and others, and most agreeable with Gods will, in which we know not usually what to pray for; but the Holy Spirit that God gives to his servants and worshippers doth, and that *helps their infirmities and makes intercession for them with groans that cannot be uttered, Rom. 8. 26. and leads his people in such cases to pray according to Gods will; as Abraham for Ishmaels life : O that Ishmael might live before thee, Gen. 17. 18, 20. Isaac for children, Gen. 25. 21. Elijah for the life of the widow of Sarephaths child be restored, 1 King. 17. and so Elisha for the Shunamite, 2 King. 4. and many the like obvious in the Scriptures.*

In

In a word, the Holy Ghost shews what things are agreeable to the will and holiness of God, and conduces to the promoting his Glory, and our own and others good, and directs us to pray for them as they be wanting and blessed God for them, as granted to us.

2. As to the manner of praying, both

1. As to the way of approaching to God, that it be not in our own righteousness, name or goodness, as if we deserved any mercy of him to our selves, or were worthy upon the account of our righteousness to obtain any thing, but in the name and upon the account of Christ, and so through and by him, his Sacrifice and Priestly intercession for us; *the new and living way to God, Heb. 10. 19, 20.* and so in Gods goodness, mercy, and righteousness through him. So *David* praying to God goes not in his goodness but in Gods, *Psal. 5. 7. As for me I will come into thy house, in the multitude of thy mercies, &c.* and in *Psal. 25. 6. According to thy mercy think thou upon me, for thy goodness-sake, O Lord:* and *Daniel Chap. 9. 17, 18. For the Lords sake, and we do not present our supplications before thee for our own righteousness, but for thy great mercies.* So the Holy Spirit instructs and directs us to come unto God by Christ, as in *Heb. 7. 25.* and in his Name to make our prayers and petitions, *John 14. 12, 13, 14. and 16. 23, 27.*

2. As to the expressions, not studying quaint and elegant words and expressions as if God delighted in them, but to utter our needs and desires in such words and expressions as the Holy Spirit leading us to minde the greatness and goodness

ness of God, the declarations of his kinde, and
 and will, & our own vileness, and meanness, and
 wants helps us with; as knowing it is the faith
 and fervencie of the heart, and the rightness of
 the frame of Spirit in our prayers that sounds best
 in Gods eare: *A broken or contrite heart, O God,*
thou wilt not despise. He that studies quaint words
to please men, prays rather to men for their applause,
than to God for his Grace and blessing; and so it
 leads not to use vain repetitions, as placing holi-
 ness, goodness, or the acceptableness of our prayers
 in such & so often reiterated expressions, or as thin-
 king to be heard for or in our much speaking, Mat.
 6. 7. though the Holy Spirit lets us see sometime
 ground and need for praying longer, and some-
 time shorter as our cases may be, as Christ was in
 prayer all night sometime, *Luc. 6. 12.* before he
 chose his Apostles, and yet sometime was very
 short, as when he raised up *Lazarus*, *John 11. 41.*
 42.

3. As to the earnestness in praying. The Holy
 Spirit leads to be chiefly earnest for those things
 that are of greatest concernment, more earnest for
 what tends to promote Gods Kingdom and right-
 eousness, and to his Glory, than for things in
 which our liberty, ease, health or the like are on-
 ly concerned, and to be most indifferent for those
 things in which Gods Name, Kingdom, or Glory
 are least concerned.

3. As to the encouragements and motives to
 pray. To pray in the Holy Ghost is to pray in the
 encouragements, motives, and motions which the
 Holy Spirit giveth. And they be such as the Gos-
 pel and Doctrine of Christ presents unto us; as,

1. The

1. The gracious goodness of God testified towards us in Christ Jesus, in whom he hath declared and manifested himself a lover of us, as his Creatures, as mankinde; yea, though sinners, and while so, in that he was pleased to appoint and send him, even his onely begotten Son into the world for us, that we might live through him, even through him, as made and become the propitiation for our sins, as in 1 John 4. 9, 10. Having not spared his Son, but delivered him up to the Death for us all, the Holy Spirit incourages us thereupon to hope, and in that hope to expect that he will also with him freely give us all things, and in such incouragement and upon such ground moves us to ask of him what is needful and good for us. Rom. 8. 26, 27, 28.

2. The compleatness of Christ as our Mediator and High Priest with God for obtaining Grace and mercy of him for us, and to that purpose making intercession: and of his Authority with God to dispense and hand unto us (as well as of wisdom to discern and see) whatever may be good and needful for us: Heb. 4. 14. Having such a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God passed into the Heavens for us, let us go boldly to the Throne of Grace, So Heb. 10. 19 20, 21, 22. Seeing we have boldness or liberty to the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus (that is, by such a compleat, full, and perfect Sacrifice, as that he hath offered for us, such as infinitely goeth beyond all the Sacrifices under the Law, as the foregoing part of that Chapter had largely shewed, such as in which is perfection for the sanctified for ever, ven.

14. *plenteousnes of Redemption forgivenes of sins, and a powerful voice to speak for our acceptance, Col. 1. 14. Heb. 12. 24.) by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail his flesh, and having an High Priest over the House of God, such a one namely as Christ is, who is holy, harmles, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the Heavens, a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck, a King, and Priest, and that too the Son of God himself, consecrated by an Oath for ever and ever, living to make intercession for us; in all which respects he is infinitely better and greater than the Priests under the Law, & abler to make us and our prayers acceptable to God, c. 7. as also having an High Priest so merciful to us, and so faithful both to God and us in all that concerns us, one that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and can succour those that be tempted, because he himself suffered and was tempted, as Chapter 2. 17, 18. and 4. 15. one that can pity and have compassion on those that are ignorant and out of the way, Heb. 5. 1, 2, 3. Let us therefore draw near with true (sincere) hearts, in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. In these encouragements the Holy Ghost moves and encourages us to draw nigh and to pray to God: as also is shewed Rom. 8. 34. in that Christ hath died for us, yea, rather is risen again, who also is at Gods right hand, and maketh intercession for us.*

37. *The infinite power and alssufficiencie of God in Christ, and of Christ in God to hear, help, save and satisfie us, and to fulfil all our petitions that are*

are according to his will, power belongs unto God, Psal. 62. 11, 12. therefore trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him; he is a refuge for us: So in Job 5. 8, 9. I would seek to God, to God would I commit my cause, who doth great things, &c. I am God Almighty, Gen. 17. 1. this encouraged Christ in the days of his flesh to pour out strong cries and tears that his Father was able to save him, all things were possible to him, Heb 5. 7, Mark 14. 36. and this through the love he hath manifested in Christ, and the greatness, faithfulness and mercifulness of Christ as our High Priest, and the infinite virtuousness of his sacrifice for us, for obtaining favour and acceptance for us with God is of great usefulness to encourage us also, that he that so loves us, and with whom we have such a Priest and Sacrifice to befriend us, is able to help and save us, as Psal. 57. 2. I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me: this encouragement the Holy Ghost propounded to and by Paul as a motive to pray to him. That the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is he of whom all the family in Heaven and earth is named, and that in him are riches of Glory, and that he is able to doe exceeding abundantly above all we ask and think, Ephes. 3. 15, 16, 20. indeed, this without the other would be little encouragement, but rather terrifie us from him; but with and through it, it gives exceeding much encouragement, to consider that he is able both in respect of wisdom and knowledge to discern our wants, and in respect of Power and Authority to supply them.

4. His Covenant and promises made and confirmed

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firm

firmed in Christ for hearing and helping those that come to him by Christ, and for perfecting all that concerns them, both as to salvation from evil, and satisfaction with good. Its his Covenant in Christ to write his Law in the heart, and to put his fear into them, and their iniquities and sins to remember no more, &c. and so it is to hear their prayers, and to save them. So Psal. 50. 14, 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me, Psal. 91. 14, 15. He shall call upon me, & I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honor him; with long life will I satisfie him, & shew him my salvation, & so by our Saviour, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, I will give it you, John 16. 23. Godliness hath the promise of this life and of that that is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. to which add,

5. His infinite truth and faithfulness through Christ to keep his Covenant and mercy for ever; this encouragement is also propounded, and was often made use of by the servants of God: as the Apostle to move the Believer to draw nigh to God uses this amongst others: Faithful is he that promised, therefore let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, which is done as well by our persevering in prayer and continuing to draw nigh to God, Heb. 10. 23. this was made use of and pleaded by Nehemiah, c. 1. 5. The great terrible God, that keepeth Covenant, and mercy for them that love him and observe his Commandments; & so by those good Levites mentioned in Neh. 9. 4, 5. in Verse 32. and by Daniel, Dan. 9. 4. as also it is propounded as an encouragement to call upon God, and to seek him, and seek his face, Psal. 105. 1. 4, 8. He hath re-
members

membr'd his Covenant for ever, &c.

6. The Relations that they stand in to God and God to them, that the Holy Spirit also makes use of to encourage to pray, and to call upon God : So in *Matth. 7. 11.* *If ye that are evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him.* So again in *Luke 11. 13.* and this also the holy men of God have been encouraged by to pray to him : as *Isa. 63. 16.* *Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, &c. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting, &c.* So *Jer. 14. 8.* *O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, &c.* And very often David makes use of this encouragement, that God *was his God, and his King, his Rock, Refuge, &c.*

7. The often proofs they have had of his Goodness, and Power, and Mercy in former times : Call to mind (says the Apostle, amongst other motives and encouragements to draw nigh to God, and to hold fast the Profession of the Faith) *the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.* And this is often made use of, and found as an encouragement to the servants of God in former times ; as, *Psal. 4. 1.* *O God of my righteousness, hear when I call : Thou hast set me at liberty when I was in distress, have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer :* and in *Psal. 18. 3.* we have David resolving to call upon the Lord, worthy to be praised ; and assuring himself, that so he should be delivered from his enemies : And see what encouraged him to that assured expectation, and so to that holy resolution, *Verse 4. 5. 6.* *The sorrows of death*

death compassed me, &c. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cryed unto my God : he heard my voyce out of his Temple, &c. Like to which is that in Psal. 116. 1, 2. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voyce and my supplication : because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him so long as I live.

8. The experience of Gods goodness and mercy to other in former or present ages, the cloud of witnesses that have gone before us, and found God gracious to them in their crying to him ; as in Psal. 22. 4, 5. Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them : They cryed unto thee, and were delivered ; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. To that purpose also, the examples of Gods goodness to others are propounded by him, to move men to taste and see by their trusting in, and calling upon God, how gracious God is, Psal. 34. 4, 5, 6. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears ; they looked unto him and were inlightened, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, &c. Whatsoever things were written before-hand being written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, Rom. 15. 4. God being one and so the same for us in & through his Son, as he was for and to any others before us ; and there is no respect of persons with him. He is rich to all that call upon him, Rom. 10. 12. 13.

Such the encouragements which the holy Ghost gives for praying & he that prays in the holy Ghost prays not in the encouragement of his own parts wisdom.

wisdom, works, or the like; but in such incouragements as these above mentioned, as to such purpose that fore-quoted from *Dan. 9. 18.* is pertinent, *We doe not present our Supplications before for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.* So that in *Psal. 5. 7. and 143. 1, 2.*

4. To pray in the holy Ghost is to pray in the operation of the holy Ghost, and so in such a frame and temper of Spirit, as the holy Ghost, being minded and yielded up to in histestimony, frames the heart unto. And so,

1. Not in pride, as the Pharisee, despising his neighbour, and lifting up himself in Gods presence.

2. Nor in self-confidence, and reliance on a mans own righteousness, as he also did, *Luk. 18. 10, 11.*

3. Nor in wrath and anger, as the Disciples, that would have called for fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans* that would not receive Christ, pretending *Elias* for a warrant to them therein, *Luk. 9. 54.* for that was not in the holy Spirit of Christ, for all that pretence; for our Saviour tells them, *They knew not what manner of Spirit they were of, ver. 55.*

4. Nor in vain-glory, as the Pharisees that prayed to be seen of men that they might have glory of them, *Matth. 6. 5, 6.*

5. Nor in ambition, seeking great things to themselves, and to be lifted up above their Brethren, as the two Sons of *Zebedee* and their Mother did; *not knowing what they asked when they requested, that they might sit the one at Christs right hand, and the other at his left in his Kingdom, Matth. 20. 20, 21, 22.*

Nor

6. Nor in strife and contention, as those in *Isa.* 58 2, 3. who fasted and prayed for *strife and debate*, ver. 4.

7. Nor to establish to themselves a righteousness in their praying, and so not submitting to the righteousness of God in Christ, as the Jews that had a zeal of God, and instantly served God day and night, hoping by their works of that nature to attain the righteousness of the Law, *Act.* 26 7. with *Rom.* 9. 30, 31. and 10. 2, 3.

8. Nor in Covetousness, as they that *howled upon their beds for corn and wine*, *Hos.* 7. 14.

9. Nor in a doubtful, distrustful frame of Spirit, that is not fixed in Gods goodness and persuaded of his truth, for such a man is *like the wave of the Sea tossed to and fro, double-minded, and inconstant in all his ways, and let not such an one think to receive any thing at Gods hands*, *Jam.* 1. 6, 7. 1 *Tim.* 2. 8.

10. Nor in an impatient unsubmitted frame of Spirit to Gods Government, frowardly hastning out of affliction: such as *Jonah* was in, when he having prophesied the destruction of *Niniveh*, and God seeing their repentance spared it, he was exceedingly displeased and very angry, and prayed God to *take away his life from him*, *Jonas* 4. 1, 2, 3.

11. Nor in a flat, cold, formal temper of Spirit, as they that *draw nigh to God with their mouth, and honor him with the lips, but the heart is far away*, *Isa.* 29: 17. or the like: but,

1. In a believing frame of heart, minding and giving credit to Gods word and testimony, the Gospel of Christ; and from the belief of that calling upon God; and in that sense, prayer in the Holy Ghost is the *prayer of Faith*, Jam. 5. 15. and prayer proceeding out of the belief of Gods sayings, believing and not doubting about them, as Jam. 1: 6. *But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting*, speaking to God because they believe his word, as in Psal. 116. 10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken*; which may have reference to speaking by prayer as well as to speaking by preaching or confession; thus David from a belief of Gods word to him by Nathan, found it in his heart to pray unto him that prayer, in 2 Sam. 7. 18, 27. for the holy Ghost is a *Spirit of Faith*, as 2 Cor. 4. 13. and therefore breaths faith into the heart where he hath the rule, and makes it breath in faith; yea, in a full assurance of faith, as believing verily the truth of God concerning Christ; yea, and Gods hearing and granting its petitions that he helps the Soul to breath forth, Heb. 10. 22. Mark 11. 24. 1 John 5. 14, 15. and a cleaving, adhering frame of Spirit, cleaving to, and trusting in God for his hearing and helping it according to his will, and the Souls needs as resolved and fixed to depend upon, trust in and wait for God, as Mic. 7. 7. *I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will bear me*; as Jacob of old, wrestling with God, and resolved not to leave him till he had blessed him, Gen. 32. 26. So, our Fathers trusted in thee; they trusted in thee and were delivered, they cried to thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded, Psal. 22. 4,

5. such a frame of Spirit the holy Ghost leads to pray in a believing, trusting frame. And,

2. With a fervent desire and frame of heart, the Holy Ghost is compared to fire. He sat on the Apostles like cloven tongues of fire. Thence, *Quench not the Spirit*; and therefore when men pray in it, it puts heat and life into them, an earnest desire after those things which it directs absolutely to seek of God. Thence it is said, *The effectual (or operative) fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*, Jam. 5. 16. They that onely say over prayers, or pray luke-warmly, coldly and formally, pray not in the Holy Ghost; though this fervour of Spirit in prayer stands not in the loud speaking and straining the voice, or in much repetitions, but in the earnestness of the Souls desires and ardencie of affection to the things prayed for, begetting importunity in asking; like that of *Jacob*, in which was both faith and fervencie. *I will not let thee go unless thou bless me*, or that of the widow to the unjust Judge, and the *Elect crying day and night unto God*, Luc. 18. 1, 7. or of the *Syrophœnician woman* that followed after Christ against all discouragements, till he granted her Petition, *Matth. 15, 22, 28.*

3. With love and charity, *without wrath* as well as *without doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. (the Holy Ghost being a Spirit of love, 2 Tim. 1. 7. and discovering the love of God in Christ to us) and therefore not despising others (as the Pharisee the Publicane) in our Prayers, nor being quick to take notice of mens offences to seek revenge for them, or aggravate them to God against them, but making intercession for the passing of them by; & yet exercising

aising goodness and mercy towards them to overcome their evils, and bring them to repent of them, as Christ did, even for his crucifiers, *Luc. 23. 34.* and Stephen for his persecutors, *Act. 7. 60.* praying for them that hate us and despitefully use us, as our Saviour teaches in *Matth. 5. 44, 45.* yet especially exercising love in our prayers to those that are beloved of God, and when other mens welfare cannot consist with their safety and welfare, then praying for the *peace of Jerusalem* with confusion to their enemies; yea, preferring the welfare of the Church of God before our own private concernments; yea, and the good of the world, before any advantages of ours in the world.

4. In a holy pure heart and Spirit, breathing after holiness, and after those things conducing thereto, rather than what conduces to the ease and liberty of the flesh, not *making provision* for that in our prayers, *to fulfil the lusts thereof*, nor seeking any where, or in dependance on any thing, but only God and Christ, making him and his Glory the end of what we ask, all which may be included in that phrase, *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw nigh with a true heart* (not double or guileful in the object of our trust, or running out from the designs of God and Christ, and what may conduce to his Glory and praise, nor with a heart set toward or for something besides God & Christ, so as to be set in competition with him. The Spirit of God is the Holy Ghost, an Holy breath in and from God, discovering in the Gospel Gods perfect hatred and abhorrencie of sin, and therefore breaths after and for God, and what may be for
Gods

Gods Glory, and in an holy, pure, and chaste disposition of heart.

5. In an humble & lowly frame of spirit, for the spirit of God is not proud nor lofty, nor loves pride & haughtiness. Its one of the *seven things that are an abomination to God*. Prov. 6 17. and 16. 7. *He resists the proud, but gives Grace to the humble*, Pro. 3. 32. therefore a proud haughty heart or frame of Spirit is not of him, and they that pray therein, vaunting themselves of their excellencies, pray not in the holy Ghost. The holy Ghost in glorifying Christ, & setting forth to us, his great love towards us, discovers the great humility of Christ; yea, and of God in Christ to humble himself, to take notice of the things in Heaven and in earth, to raise up the poor from the dust, and the needy from the dung-hill, to set them on the Throne with Princes, Psal. 113. 5, 6, 7, 8. especially as manifested in the person of Christ who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the forme of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man humbled himself to the death, the death of the Cross, in which he also discovered the great cause we have to be humbled, low and little in our own eyes, for in testifying the love of Christ to us, that he died for all, he testifies also of us all, that we were dead, dead at Law, and such as deserved to have died, and were thereto condemned: so that had not Christ died for us, we should have perished. Our misery was such, that no lesser price could ransom us therefrom, no lesser Sacrifice could make an expiation for us.

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He that prays in the mindfulness & sense of these things will be abased and laid low in the presence of God, as knowing not only the great disproportion between God and him as his creature, dust & ashes (as *Abraham* had the sense of that with him in his speaking to God. when he said, *Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord who am but dust & ashes*, Gen. 18. 27.) but also the wretchedness and sinfulness of our natures, and that what we are or have that is good, we are and have it only and wholly of his Grace. *In us in our flesh, there dwells no good thing*; nothing worthy of Gods acceptance; yea, that *all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags*, Isa. 64. 6. And so he that prays in the Holy Ghost prays in all lowliness of minde, and such reverence of the outward man as becomes Gods height and goodness, and his own vileness, confessing his own sins and sinfulness, though yet with confidence in Gods mercy through Christ Jesus, as above.

6. Yea, He that prays in the Holy Ghost prays in an acknowledgment of the Grace and goodness of God towards mankind and towards himself in particular with thankfulness; and so joyns thanksgiving for his mercies and benefits with his prayers and Petitions for further mercies that he wants; and doth not so pore upon his wants and troubles, and desire freedom from them, as to set nothing by all Gods benefits before conferred. So the Apostles, as was also noted above, exhort to joyn thanksgiving with our prayers, as most clear to that purpose is that in *Philip. 4. 6, 7. In nothing be careful, but in all things by prayer and supplication*.

plications with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. An unthankful, murmuring complaining temper, is not of the Holy Ghost.

7. In a submissive frame of Spirit (which also is a fruit of humility before spoken of) in which though the heart be filled with earnestness and confidence in God for what he sees needful and good for it self and others, yet it resignes it self to Gods will as for time and way; yea, and in things not absolutely needful for Gods granting or withholding them, even as Christ though earnest in praying that the Cup might pass from him, yet submitted his will to his Fathers, *Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not my will, but thy will be done*, Matth. 26, 39. to which we may also referre a patient tarrying the Lords leisure, and not making haste or turning away from God, or ceasing to pray to him, if we have not presently granted the thing that we ask. For as the Spirit of God is a spirit of Faith, so also of patient waiting, that being a fruit of faith. *He that believeth maketh not haste*, Isa. 28. 16. Such is the praying in the holy Ghost, not to mention any other particulars. And that's the second thing inquired.

3. The third is; what is implied in exhorting believers so to pray. And that is divers things, as,

1. That believers are not able or sufficient of themselves, as of themselves to keep themselves in the love of God, or to that purpose to edifie or build up themselves on their most holy faith. They need the help and furtherance of God and his

Grace

Grace thereunto. In all their minding his Grace, exercise of their gifts, walking in Charity, &c. they need to look to God for direction and guidance and for his strength and assistance. they need him to build them up in their building up themselves, and to keep watch over them, in all keeping themselves and watching over themselves and one another. *Except the Lord, build the house (in this sense too) they labour but in vain, that build it. And except the Lord watch over the City, the watchman watcheth but in vain, Psal. 127. 1, 2.* their strength being so small, and their enemies so many and so great.

2. That there is sufficient Grace in God and Christ for their helpfulness therein, and that also communicable to them by him: by which they may be built up and so be kept in his love, all the oppositions from without them or from within them, notwithstanding. If they had sufficiencie in and of themselves, or in what they have already received, then need they not cry unto God continually for more from him; or if there were none in him for them, to be afforded to them, than no ground or encouragement for their crying to him, however much they might want; but in willing them to pray in their building up themselves both are implied, we need like the builders of the wall in *Nehemiahs* time to fight with one hand and to build with the other, and the former by praying to, and calling upon God; for *so shall we be saved from our enemies*, Psal. 18.

3. for we are not led to pray to a God that cannot save, but to him who is mighty in power, able to save us, one that can perform all things for us

as

as being Almighty, able to doe all things,, and hath made ready in Christ all supplies of Grace and Blessing for us: *all things are ready* that may conduce unto our protection and preservation in his Grace, and the edifying our selves in our most holy faith, as well as for bringing us at first thereunto.

3. That yet God will be sought unto and depended on for the supplies of his Grace to us: he will have us in that way exercise our faith in him, in calling upon him, though he could give us without our asking, and doth give us and doe much for us before we ask, to move and incourage us to look to him and ask of him for more; yet he will have us accustome our selves in that exercise of prayer to him; to that purpose are many passages in Scripture, as, *Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me*, Psal. 50. 15. so in Jer. 33. 3. *Call unto me and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not*, Ezek. 36: 37. God having promised to do great things for Israel, yet says, *For this he will yet be inquired of by them.* And our Saviour bids ask, seek, knock, and so they should receive, find, and have it opened to them, Matth. 7. 7, 8. And this God will have his people do:

1. That they might therein exercise and shew forth their faith in him, and dependance on him for his Grace, while they goe to him for all things, as a child to his Father, or as a wife to her Husband. Therefore it is noted in Scripture as a fruit and consequent of faith, *with the heart*

man believeth unto righteousness, and when with the mouth confession is made to Salvation, for whosoever calleth upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved, Rom. 10. 10, 11, 12, 13.

2. That they may have more acquaintance and intercourse with God, and not live as strangers from him, but by calling often upon him, and receiving answers of Grace from him, have a holy familiarity and communion with him; as persons daily resorting to the Court and speaking to the King, and presenting Petitions to him, and receiving answers from him, thereby get more knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him; and so are fitted the better for going out and publishing to others the manner of his entertainment of mens suits, and the vertues and goodness they discern in him. Children that scarce ever come and speak to their Father grow strange to him; and so do men that make little use of this priviledge of coming nigh unto God; whereas such as come dayly to him to ask favours of him gather good acquaintance and proof of his love and faithfulness to them; David implies this, in saying, *Ob, taste and see that the Lord is good*, Psal. 34. 8. and *Eliphaz* in saying to *Job*, *Acquaint (or accustome) thy self now with God*, Job. 22. 21.

3. To keep them in a more reverend awe of him, lest they should offend him, and so put a barr against their own petitions to him; for as Children that have often occasion to come before their Parents will be more careful of dirtying or soyling their cloathes, or tearing and renting them; or of doing any thing unbecoming them, if they know their

their parents cannot like to see them in such a case; whereas they that seldome come into their sight, grow more loose and careless, dirtied and torn, &c. even so God foresees that if we did not come often to him we would be little careful of our conversation before him; whereas *seeing we call upon the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man righteously according to his works,* therefore it beloves us to *pass the time of our sojourning here in fear*, and take heed that we regard not iniquity in our hearts, because that wil provoke God to hide himself from us, & not hear our prayers: That he might make us therefore stand in awe of him, and be perfect with him, he makes us to be often waiting upon him in his presence and begging at his door for Grace and Mercy to help us in our needs, 1 Pet. 1. 17. Psal. 66. 18.

4. To give us more experience of his care over us, and notice taking of us, and so of his love to us, in that he hears our prayers and helps us. Did we not pray unto him we should not have that experience, that his eyes are open upon us, and his eares attentive to our prayers, we should look upon mercies as proceeding from some other causes, & be more obnoxious to atheistical principles; whereas the experience of his nighness to us gives us a more full proof of his care over us, and so of his being, power, goodness, &c.

5. To incite us to a more love and thankfulness to him, as we have more acquaintance and familiarity with him, and experience of his kindness to us; and so also to forgive and doe good to one another: as knowing that we do often need and receive forgiveness from him, and manifold ben-
 efits

nefits and favours upon our asking ; yea , oft-times above what we either ask or think.

6. To provoke us to more humble and lowly demeanour of our selves before him and towards one another, while we are always as beggars, acknowledging our own wants and weakneses, and insufficiencie of our selves, and our dependance for all good things upon him, and have often experience of the distempers of our own hearts & occasion of confessing and bewailing them. that we might not bear up our selves as Lords, that need to be beholding to God in nothing.

7. That we might have more proof and experience of the vertuousness of Christs Sacrifice and Mediation for us in making our prayers acceptable, and procuring Grace and blessing for us, and gracious answers to us ; for these and the like reasons God will be sought unto by us ; which was the third thing implied in that phrase.

4. Here is also further implied and signified to us, that of and by our selves, though we have need to pray to God continually, yet we know not how to pray as we ought, but are apt to offend and goe wrong therein, to vent forth our passions, or our corrupt and carnal desires and affections, ambition, pride, revenge, covetousness, distrustfulness, murmurings, or the like, and therefore need the directions and helpfulness of another, wiser and holier than our selves, even the Holy Ghost, the breath and Spirit of God, to infuse light and truth into us, and direct and guide us thereby, and frame our hearts a right therein, that we may pray acceptably to God by Jesus Christ our Lord, and

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not loose our labour in praying, or procure a curse to our selves in stead of a blessing.

5. That God hath not left us, nor doth leave us unto our own wisdom, parts, and abilities to guide us in our prayers, and frame our prayers and desires for us; nor yet leave us to prescribed formes, and external directions and impositions of others to supply our weakneses and inabilities to pray, but gives his holy Spirit to those that believe in him and obey him, to help them in their prayers to him, that they may *offer up spiritual Sacrifices* in him acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, *Act. 5. 31, 32. Joh. 7. 37, 38. Rom. 8. 26, 27. 1 Pet. 2. 5.* which Holy Spirit being in and with God in Christ and proceeding thence is acquainted with the minde of God, *Rom. 8 26, 27. 1 Cor. 2. 10.* and discovers to the believer what the minde and will of God is in those things that concern him to pray for, so far at least as to direct to pray acceptably thereabout to him, he being a *Spirit of wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Christ, Ephes. 1. 17, 18.* and frames the heart according to the minde and will of God in praying, and begets longing desires and *groans that cannot be uttered in them.* So that he that hath blessings to bestow on us, and hath revealed it to be his mind that we should seek them of him, and hath opened a way for us in and by his Son for approaching to him, and pouring out our hearts before him, pitying our ignorances and inabilities, hath provided, promised, and faithfully affords his own holy Spirit in the teachings, operations, and efficacie of it, to inable us to pray to him in that

that way, and for those things that he hath prepared for us, and set before us: and for such spiritual Sacrifices or prayers, Christ is appointed also the High-Priest to take away the iniquities that cleave to them, as there is in them any thing of our ignorance, error, and mistake, and to make them acceptable to him, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5.

6. That God having done all this for us, and affording such help to us as is suitable to his holiness, and our needs requires of us, not to neglect this his Grace, not to worship in the oldness of the Letter, in form and fashion, and outside only, or in our own wit, parts, and wills, &c. but in Spirit and truth in all things, *watching unto and in prayer*, that we pray in and according to the light and direction that he gives us in the Gospel, asking onely such things, and in such way and manner as the Gospel instructs us; and in such a frame of Spirit as the Holy Ghost therein begets and nourishes in us in attending to the Grace of Christ as therein set before us, and keeping that (which is the ministration of the holy Spirit, the very air as it were in which it breaths) in our hearts and mindes to direct and lead us. They therefore do evilly that neglect the Gospel and the holy Ghost, as breathing therethrough in us, and take up other ways and helps in stead thereof, and especially such as would tie up men to other helps, as forms and impositions of words & frames; as if God gave not his holy Spirit now to help his servants. And it may be observed that since the giving of the holy Spirit to those that believe in Christ, we finde no formes of prayer invented,

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proposed,

proposed, or imposed by Christ or his Apostles upon men as there were before he was given so to them, and received by them. Though in case of the ignorance and insufficiencie of the Ministry (which yet the Bishops ought not to suffer, but provide and put in such as are sufficient and well qualified according to those rules in *1 Tim. 3.* and *Tit. 1.*) or to prevent mens disorderly prayings that some good and unexceptionable forms may be prescribed for publike Assemblies. I do not utterly deny that in *Matth. 6.* upon some such accounts it may seem that Christ prescribed.

7. That possibly men may, yea, believers also, and too often doe, neglect the help of the Holy Spirit, yea, and may too often neglect prayer it self, restraining prayer before God, and not pouring out their hearts therein to him; but seek by other means to defend and keep themselves, against the assaults of enemies, and that if they do pray, yet they may not pray in the holy Ghost, in what light and instruction he gives them in and by the Doctrine of Christ, and in his operations therethrough in their hearts; and so in such faith, love, charity, humility, resignation of themselves to the will of God, earnestness and fervencie as becomes them, and as the Grace of God and his Gospel instructs to; and his holy Spirit therethrough believed and minded, uses to work in men, and frame their hearts to, but may possibly, as too often they doe, rest in some forms, or if not so, yet pray in their own selfish, ignorant, carnal spirit, asking those things that suite their wills and humours and lusts, their own advancement, glory, ease, &c. and not those things

things that tend to the glory of Christ and furtherance of his Name, praise and Kingdom in the world, and in such an evil, selfish, peevish, uncharitable, proud, passionate distemper of spirit, as the wisdom or will of the flesh begets or produces in men; and not in such a frame and efficacy as is of Gods spirit, which kinde of praying is displeasing to God, who being a Spirit, will be worshipped by men in spirit and truth, and cannot accept or like of that that is not of his holy spirit; and therefore also is unprofitable to men and tends not to build them up in the most holy faith: whence need for exhorting believers, and for believers to accept the exhortation, both to pray, and to see that they doe it aright, not in any spiritless, formal way, or in any carnal and unholy Spirit, but in the holy Ghost.

8. That this praying in the holy Ghost is a good means to edifie the believers in their most holy Faith, and so for keeping them in the love of God; for therefore this clause is joyned with them, and joyned with them in such a manner of speaking, as clearly denotes and implies it to be a means to them. For in saying, *Building up your selves on your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost*, he shews, that the building up themselves on their most holy faith would not goe well on, if trusting to their own power and skill, therein they should neglect Gods help, or neglect to pray and call upon God for it in such a way as he might accept them, and send them help. Therefore they were to doe that with the former action as a means to it, and then in coupling the

counsel to both those, and that absolutely by a Verb or word of command or counsel, *Keep yourselves in the love of God*; and mentioning both of those by a Participle, as having reference to some further end, namely, that expressed in that following counsel: he implies, that they be both of them means to that great end; or that such a building themselves on their most holy Faith, as is exercised with praying in the Holy Ghost, will much conduce to, or is the means to preserve and keep themselves in the love of God: Which leads us to the next enquiry, namely,

4. How the praying in the Holy Ghost conduces to the keeping our selves in the love of God. To which it is to be minded (as was noted above) that the love or peculiar favour of God, and his blessing, is fixed upon the foundation, or most holy faith in the first place. It firstly fastens upon, and imbraces Christ his beloved delightful one, who is the great subject of the Gospel Doctrine, and for his sake it is, upon or with that Doctrine also, as it sets forth and contains his name, and is the means to glorifie him to men, and to draw in men to him, so as his eye and heart is thereupon as a most holy thing to him, the slights of which he will slight and punish with more intolerable judgements than those upon *Sodom and Gomorrah*; as in *Matth. 10. 15.* and those that receive and embrace, that are imbraced and beloved of him, so as to be rewarded with life everlasting, *John 5. 24. He that heareth my words* (which he gave to his Apostles, and they preached in his name) *and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, &c.* and *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth, and*

is baptized (namely into Christ) shall be saved, &c. Thence it follows that that which furthers mens being edified and built up on that most holy faith, doth also further their being and abiding in that love and favour of God which he bears toward those that are thereupon for the sake thereof. And so praying in the Holy Ghost, conduces to the keeping men in the love of God, as it is a means to keep them on their most holy Faith: And a means thereto is, both,

1. As there is no praying in the Holy Ghost, but by and from the most holy Faith, Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine of him taken heed unto, and minded by men: Praying in the H. Gh. then, argues a being on the most holy Faith, and exercises men to it, even to the holding to, and minding of it; because the Holy Spirit is *not* otherwise to be met with to breath in us, and frame our hearts to spiritual and right desires and prayers, but on that most holy Faith; for the Holy Spirit is *onely* that way ministred, namely, *By the hearing of Faith, and not by the works of the Law*, much less by any inventions and works in obedience to other Laws, or in any lawless courses, *Gal 33. 3.* The Holy Spirit dwells and rests upon Christ, and is sent forth in his name unto men, *Isa. 42. 1. & 61. 1. & 11. 12. John 14. 26.* and that to witness to Christ, lead them to, and unite them with him, *John 15. 26. & 16. 13, 14. 1 Cor. 6. 17.* for he is *to dwell* in Christ, as not to be separated from him, and therefore all that he dwells in, must be one with Christ also; for it is by vertue of Christ, and in union with him, that he that dwells and rests on Christ, the head, dwells in them as his members all.

so. And it is in the Name and Doctrine of Christ, as Christ is therein named and set forth, that the Holy Spirit breathes unto and in men therein, and makes it a Ministration of Spirit, or a means of conveying the light, power, presence and influence of the Spirit; which is therefore no further abiding in men, and leading and framing them, than that Word and Doctrine of Christ in which he is ministered, and Christ as held forth therein, is received by, and abides in men, and they in them. Whence that in 2 John 9. *Whoso transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God* (to wit, by his Holy Spirit in and with them; for so God dwells in Believers, namely by his Spirit, as in Ephes. 2. 21.) *Whoso abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son*; namely, in and by the influence and presence of the Spirit of both in and with them, as well as in other considerations for them. So then he that prayeth in the Holy Ghost, being on the most holy Faith, and so in Christ, in whom and for whose sake God so loveth and favoureth men, as we have shewed, must needs be in the love of God, and the praying in the Holy Ghost, a means to keep men in the love of God, because it is a way to keep men in Christ, and a fruit of their keeping in him.

2. Again, it must needs be a means to preserve Believers in the love of God, as it is a means to obtain further grace from God, for more building up themselves on their most holy Faith, where the love of God runs, and is certainly enjoyed; for what men ask of God, believing in Christ, and in the name of Christ, as the Holy Spirit instructs and moves them, they do surely receive it of God; as

Christ

Christ hath promised, saying, *Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it,* John 14. 13, 14. and again, *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what ye will, it shall be done to you,* John 15. 7. and again, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,* John 16. 23, 24. And thus the Apostle Paul implies of the prayers of the faithful, put forth in the Spirit of God, when he speaking of the Spirit it self making Intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered, adds, *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth* (which may signifie also, approveth) *what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh Intercession for us, according to the will of God,* Rom. 8. 26, 27. Now this is one main thing that the Holy Spirit instructs and leads such as be led by him in their prayers, to desire and pray for, That they may be more confirmed, rooted and built up on their most holy Faith, and so be preserved in the Grace of Christ, and love of God; and that such Spiritual mercies and blessings may be extended to them, as may further them therein. So that the praying in the Holy Ghost, as it springs from the being on the most holy Faith, or rather from that faith abiding in us, and exercising the heart thereto, wherein the love of God is certainly enjoyed: So it also obtains of God, through Christ, a further rootedness therein, and growing up thereon, and so by consequence, an abiding in, yea, an encrease of this grace and favour of God upon them.

3. Thereby

3. Thereby also is obtained of God, through Christ, power and grace to withstand the assaults of Satan, and deceits of all his Instruments and Engines imployed by him to draw men out of the most holy Faith, and so out from the grace and love of God toward them; and therefore (as we see before) *this praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*, is mentioned as the last piece of the whole Armour commended to us by the Apostle, as of main use or force to preserve us in the evil day or time of temptation, from being overcome of Satan, and turned aside from the truth of Christ, and love of God, Ephes. 6. 18. according to that of David in Psal. 18. 3. *I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from mine enemies*: and the practices and experiences of the servants of God, often mentioned in the Scriptures, as Psal. 22. 4, 5, 24. & 34. 3, 4, 5. *for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much with God* (the God that hath stiled himself, a God hearing prayers) both for himself and others. 'Let no man therefore (as also Bernard saith) despise prayer; for if it be 'in faith and in the Holy Ghost, it is heard and recorded in heaven as soon, as (if not before) it proceed out of thy mouth here. And one of these 'two things (*saith he*) we may assuredly expect, 'namely, either that God will give us; what we 'we ask, or what he knows to be better for us, and 'more profitable than what we ask.

Use. What we have considered about these means of keeping our selves in the love of God; viz. The building up our selves on the most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost, might be diversely

versly useful. I shall onely hint at some uses of it.

1. It may reprove and tax the too great sloathfulness and negligence found with us, and many Believers in every place, in not minding to build up our selves on our most holy faith; and to that purpose, to exercise our selves to the mindfulness of that faith, and oft speaking one to another, and thinking on the Name and Doctrine of God, exhorting and furthering the faith of one another therein, and conformity thereto: There is too much minding other things mean time in us, the present world, our own names, honors, ease, lusts, wills, &c. and too great aptness to let those things, as noxious roots spring up and ~~choak~~ the good seed in us, so as *that it brings not forth in us fruit to perfection*. Thence a too great aptness to forsake the assembly of our selves, unto such purposes as to exhort and edifie our selves; a fault reprov'd, *Heb.* 10. 25. as also the abuse of such liberties to assemble together to edifie our selves, which is too general or common; when Believers coming together, come not for the better, and for edification, or do not so improve their assemblings, but rather for hearing and telling news, if not (which is worse) for contention and strife, and what tends to destruction: A fault reprov'd, *1 Cor.* 11. 17, 18.

2. In not stirring up our selves to call upon God, and be much in prayer to him, both in private for our selves and others, and publickly or altogether, as was practis'd by the Apostles and Believers, *Acts* 1. 13, 14. & 2. 41 & 6. 4. & 12. 5, 12. & 13. 2. There is too great an hanging down of the hands every where among

among Believers, instead of a diligent *lifting up pure hands*, in the name of the Lord, *without wrath and doubting*, as we are exhorted, *1 Tim. 2 8.* a fault reprov'd, *Isa. 64. 7.* *There is none that calleth upon thy name, or that stirreth up himself to take hold on thee*; and bewailed by *Daniel*, Chap 9. 13. *All this evil is come upon us* (as we may see and say much evil is come upon us) yet *made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand the truth*: Too great a fault in restraining prayer are we guilty of, and that also much hinders our edification and profiting in the most holy faith, and deprives of much experience of the love of God, and lays us open to vanity, and many assaults and snares of sin and Satan, to the procuring wrath and displeasure from God upon us.

3. It may also reprove and fault the formality and faultiness of our prayings and exercises of our selves in our assemblings together (as praying here may be put for all exercises of seeking the Lord, as praying and seeking him be put together, *Zech. 8. 21 22.*) that we pray so much in our own spirits, and so little in the Holy Spirit; so much with an unholy frame and temper of spirit, as holding fast iniquity, corruption and deceit, and refusing to return from it, taking the name of God in vain, or seeking perishing meat to our selves in our pretensions to follow after Christ; as seeking therein a name and honor, or followers to our selves, or the colouring over our love of vanity with an appearance of piety, or thinking to bribe Gods justice and our own consciences, for our lusts and iniquities, by multiplying prayers and professions,

or praying out of strife, vain-glory, hypocrisie, wrath, or the like : which are not prayings in the Holy Ghost, but far of another nature ; such prayings be often reprov'd in the Scripture ; as *Isa.* 1. 12, 15. *Matth.* 6. 5 6. *James* 4 3.

4. It may reprove also those high thoughts and conceits we are apt to have of our selves, cases, conditions, attainments, &c. as if we were rich, and full, and needed nothing more, either as to the building us up on our most holy faith, or as to experiments of Gods love and favour to us : which is a great cause of that sloathfulness in building up our selves, and in praying before reprov'd : *Laodicea's* conceits of her self, was the cause of her lukewarmness, and not looking out to Christ, and buying gold and white rayment of him : *The full soul loaths the honey comb*, a conceit of sufficiency of attainment, or to attain what is wanting without our own care and diligence, makes us negligent in seeking to grow, or in looking to God in his Holy Spirit for what may make us grow and further build us up. High conceits of our selves usually produce sloathfulness, and *sloathfulness casts into a deep sleep*, and then the building may soon decay, and *through idleness of the hands, the house may drop thorow*, as *Rev.* 3. 14, 15, 16. *Prov.* 19. 15. *Eccles.* 10. 18. Again,

5. It reproveth the instability in the faith of the Gospel too much, and too often found amongst the Professors thereof, and an aptness thence to be building besides the holy faith ; which is indeed, with the *foolish woman*, to pull down the house instead of building it, *Prov.* 14. 1. And so the itching ear after new matters of faith, besides, and swarving

swarving from the Apostles Doctrine, a fault prophesied of and reprov'd in 2 *Tim.* 4. 3, 4. and admonish'd of in *Heb.* 13. 7, 8, 9. as if we did not judge the Doctrine of Christ most holy, and therefore seek holiness and perfection some other ways, as *Gal.* 3. 2, 3. *Isa.* 66. 17.

6. It reproveth those also that prohibit and hinder the Assemblies and Exercises of the fearers of God, for building up and furthering themselves and one another in their most holy faith, forbidding them to meet together, speak

Contrary to to, or exhort one another, and tying them up only to forms of praying, and to hear their Parish Ministers read Prayers, and preach (it may be, things that tend not to

their helpfulness; they being in many places ignorant, rude, and enemies to the Holy Spirit, and all that is truly spiritual and holy) punishing men for seeking out for, and using other and better means of edification than they afford them: imitating therein the Jews and Pharisees, opposers of Christ and of his Apostles, and the Christians in their private Assemblies; as in *Acts* 4. & 5. & 8. & 9. & 17. &c. Such are faulty in so doing.

7. It reproveth too such as think there is no profit in praying to God; no gain in godliness, a vain thing to serve him, and to keep his Ordinances, as in *Job* 21. 15. & 22. 17. *Mal.* 3. 14, 15. as if he had said to the house of Israel (and so to us Gentiles) *seek his face in vain.* This is an evil and impious thought in the places above cited, taxed and reprov'd, and the contrary abundantly shewed in the Scriptures, and proved by the Saints and holy

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ones of God, that there is no gain like to that of godliness, *which hath the promise of this life, and of that to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8.* to which purpose is that of Eliphaz in *Job 22. 21.* Acquaint now thy self with God, and be at peace, so shall good come unto thee Receive I pray thee the Law from his mouth, and lay up his words within thee (that's the way to acquaint our selves with him, and be filled with his Spirit, that we may pray in the Holy Ghost: and then it follows) *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity* (that is, sorrow, pain and evil, as the fruits of iniquity) *far from thy tabernacle.* Here's the way to be built up, the turning to, and so acquainting our selves with God, in receiving the Law from his mouth, and laying up his words (the most holy faith) in our hearts: and then the profit that follows will be great, *Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir* (even the gold tried with fire, which Christ gives to those that wait upon him) *as the stones of the brook: yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty (or enough) of silver* (what's good for thee here also :) Yea, and that that's more desirable than silver, which will give content to our hearts, and make us content too with that portion of outward goods or comforts that he is pleased to give us here, be it more or less: for, *Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer to him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows, &c.*

8. It may also reprove those more abundantly, that profess themselves Believers in, and followers of Christ, and frequent private Meetings of themselves together, pretendedly to call upon God and edifie themselves on their most holy Faith, but under such pretences do seditiously & rebelliously plot mischief against Authorities and Powers over them, because they put them upon some things cross to their desires, and perhaps in some places do really discountenance better exercises in which case (if any doe so) they ought to exercise faith and patience, and yet pray for those that hate and persecute them, and not pray, much less plot against them, fretting themselves to doe evil and practise treason and sedition; thats not the way to edifie themselves or others on the most holy faith, but an exceeding wicked abuse of their meetings and Liberties, thereto by providence enjoyed, and a marvellous deviation from the most holy Faith; which condemns all such practises, and instructs to *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him*, till he order the hearts of Authorities to favour and protect them, or break the yoke some way of his own gracious finding out from off their necks; & as followers & imitators of the Lamb to fight only with his weapons, and only against what he opposes, that is, the pride, tyranny, injustice, profaness and wickedness of men, by spiritual weapons: the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, patient bearing of injuries, not loving their lives unto Death, not being overcome of evil, to render evil for evil, but to overcome evil with goodness; this is the way Christ would have us to walk in, in such cases, and not in

a way of rebellion to resist evil, offending Authorities, and putting a sword in their hands to slay those also that are better principled and minded, and assemble together to better purposes : *Woe to the world because of such offences, it cannot be but that offences come, but woe to that man by whom they come :* the Lord preserve and keep us that we be not of them in any thing, but that in all our carriages and conversations we may be *blameless and harmless, the children of God in the midst of those amongst whom he sets us, building up our selves on our most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost.*

Use 2. It may exhort and provoke us to take this course to keep our selves in the love and Grace of God, where we are in it, to build up our selves, as hath been before shewed, on our most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, to which what hath been noted, affords both motive and encouragement.

1 *Motive*, From the consideration of the end of so building up our selves, and the fruit and consequents of it :

1. The end is, that we may be *habitations for God by his Spirit*, for thats the end as hath been noted of Gods building; and therefore the end both of his having laid such a foundation as the most holy Faith to be built upon, and of his calling, drawing, and (as it were) laying the Souls of men to and upon it; and of his bidding us to build up one another, and giving gifts and advantages to those purposes. It is that we being

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built up, he might dwell in us by his holy Spirit, *Ephes. 2. 21, 22.* and so fill us with his presence, blessing, and Glory, as he did the Temple of old, a Type hereof; and the more we grow up into and are built up upon Christ, the more he will inhabit and dwell in and with us by his Spirit, and afford us his presence.

2. A second and further end is, our being kept in the love of God, under his special care and protection, for as God said of old of the Temple built up and dedicated to him, the like will he say of, and perform toward this his spiritual building; yea, and so much the more and the rather, by how much he being a Spirit, is more delighted in spiritual things, than in bodily and carnal, as that old Temple was; whereas his people built upon Christ are a spiritual house, *1 Pet. 2. 5. with John 4. 24.* and by how much the truth and substance is beyond the type and figure or shadow. Now he said of that material Temple in *2 Chron. 7. 16. Now have I chosen and sanctified this house that my Name may be there for ever, and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually:* and then,

3. The fruits and consequents hereof must needs be excellent and glorious, such as may move us to minde this work and business of self edification with cheerfulness and diligence, as,

1. Gods dwelling and delighting in a people will be their safety and defence, so as no harm or mischief shall befall them from all that are enemies to them and seek to harm them; for he is mighty to save, and will surely be as good or better an inhabitant of his house than other men are or can be

be of theirs. He will put forth his power and greatness for the defence of it; thence that in *Isai. 12. 6.* Cry out and shout thou inhabitant of Sion, for great is the Holy One in the midst of thee: and that in *Zeph. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17.* Sing, O Daughter of Sion, shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoyce with all thy heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem, the Lord hath taken away thy Judgement, he hath cast out thine enemy. The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee, thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, fear thou not, and to Zion, let not thine hand be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy, &c. It is true, that those things are spoken of the Church and people of God when they shall be fully built up and gloriously inhabited of God in the last times, or in the Kingdom of his Glory; but yet there is a measure of it, a first fruits now to be met within Gods dwelling by his Spirit in his people built up in a measure for him; whence the like rejoycings, or gloryings in his presence with his people now in the days of trial (or rejoycings neare of him at least thereto) in *Psal. 46. 1. 6.* God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the Seas, though the waves thereof roar, &c. and then in vers. 4, 5. shewing the ground of this fearlesness, he adds, There is a River the streams whereof make glad the City of God, the holy place of the Tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

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God shall help her, and that right early : and as a proof of his helpfulness he adds. *The Heathen raged, the Kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. And Psal. 48. 3: God is known in her Palaces for a refuge, speaking of Gods Church as his City; as Gods people are called in the Scripture both his House and City, as Ephes. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. His presence in his House and City is their safety; nothing can harm them, unless their defilements of his House, or of their Hearts and Societies causing him to abhor and loath them, as in the Type, Psal. 78. 58, 59, 60, 61, &c.*

2. Gods dwelling with and in his people as his house and delighting in them will afford them all fulness of supply and satisfaction, his House and household (for they are both Ephes. 2. 19, 20.) shall want nothing good and needful for them, for their maintenance, upholding, and abundant rejoicing. Whence David preferred the being in any the lowest place in Gods house, though but at the threshold, before the most settled dwelling he might have in the most sumptuous Palaces of the wicked, called by him to signify the flittingness of them) the Tents of the ungodly; because the Lord God is a Sun and shield, and will give Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly with him. Thence also partly it is, that his City or dwelling place is called upon so much to rejoyce for his presence with it in the places above cited. He makes a feast in his house, and satisfactions to their desires who dwell in it hee them freely gives. psal. 65. 9. psal. 9. 1.

9. i, 2, 3. *Psal.* 36. 8, 9, 10. He will fill his house with all all materials and provisions good for it, and,

3. He will adorn and beautify his habitation that he loves as well as fill and satisfie those particular Souls that are therein. *He will beautifie the place of his Sanctuary, and make the place of his feet glorious, Isa. 60. 13. He will beautifie the meek with his Salvation, because he takes pleasure in them, Psal. 149. 4.* He will have his House and habitation glorious, answerable in some sort to his own glory and greatness; that it may be said of it as in *Jer. 17. 12. A glorious high Throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary; Glorious from the beginning or foundation of it, from Christ who is the the beginning of the Creation (especially of the new Creation) of God. Rev. 3. 14. It hath all its glory and beauty in, and from his beauty and comeliness put upon it, as it is said in Ezek. 16. 14. 15. and both these last mentioned fruits and consequents of Gods dwelling in and loving his people, are spoken of Psal. 132. 13, 14. &c. where under the name of Zion it is thus spoken of the Church of God, The Lord hath chosen Zion, He hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it; wherein is implied, both his love of it, and dwelling in it, and then follow the benefits thereof. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfie her poor with bread. There's his bounty and liberality, as the great house keeper in or amongst them. I will also clothe her Priests with Salvation (with Christ the Salvation of God and his virtue and efficacie in and with them for*

saving others) and her Saints shall shout aloud for joy, there's his adorning her, as also that which is the result of them all, her exceeding joy and gladness; yea,

4. Honour and Dignity, hence also accreus to them as his house and habitation beloved by him, *ver. 17. There will be made the horn of David to bud*, that is, the Kingdom and power of David, or the Son of David, Christ, as to his power and Kingdom shall there spring forth, and there shall be a lamp or light for his Anointed. It is an honor for an house to be the Palace of the Prince, and to a City to be the City of some great King, this honor have the Saints, by being Gods house, & City, built up for him, and inhabited by him, whence also it is called, the City of God, the new Jerusalem, as well as the house and Temple of God, holy and honourable by its relation to him, and his presence in it; such the motives to this building up our selves on our most holy faith and to that purpose praying to God to help us therein.

2. The encouragements to and in it are divers. But I shall take notice especially of these in the Text, *viz.*

1. That it is the holy, yea, the most holy faith, that we are called to and built upon. Its a right and good foundation, so strong and steady that nothing can remove it; & therefore what is thereon built cannot be overthrown by any force or violence that may come against it, thats one encouragement in building to build on and go on in it with courage and cheerfulness when we know the foundation is so well laid, so strong and steady that it cannot be moved, and that it will keep up
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the building from falling, if well laid upon it, and cemented to it; as it is a great discouragement, and may weaken the hands to suspect the foundation not good and firm; but here's no cause to doubt of that, *The foundation of God stands firm, having this Seal, the Lord knows them that are his,* &c. 2 Tim. 2. 19. we may go on boldly to believe on him, and to exercise faith, and encourage our hearts in hope from the consideration of him: *For he that believeth and hopeth in him shall not be ashamed,* because he is a precious corner-stone; a sure foundation, Isa. 28. 16. His person is so great and honourable, none may compare with him; we cannot doubt his power and ability to save us, his graciousness with his Father in all his addresses to him on our behalf to him, because he is his only begotten Son; yea, and because he being such an one hath perfectly obeyed him and offered up himself in Sacrifice to him through the eternal Spirit, wherein he hath so pleased God his Father, made such an atonement for our sins, obtained such a Redemption, such forgiveness of sins, is so powerful an High-Priest in the vertues of it with God for us, and is so faithful and so merciful to us, and what he hath ^{done} in obeying his Father for us, and minding our interest to the Death, the Death of the Cross, is so full of vertue and he's so full of blessing upon the account thereof, and so able and allsufficient to confer it upon us, to the saving us from all evil and satisfying us with all good: that there is great, yea, most perfect reason and ground for us to look too, and close with him, believe in him, come to and rest upon him, and so to go on, listening to and obeying him,

him, and holding fast the profession of our Faith concerning him. There cannot be a better, surer, and fuller foundation for us to build on, no Rock like him our God; none so able to save us, none beside him provided for us, and given to us.

2. Yea, He is not only the most sure foundation, so perfect as nothing can be added to him to make him more sure and firm, and so to add firmness to us from him, but also the most holy, most consecrated, divine, acceptable to God, known and approved, and beloved of God; so holy, as that he, by and through the knowledge of himself in this Doctrine that sets him forth is most meet and fit to infuse holiness into us, and devote us to God, and make us to be owned and approved of, also by him, and to be delighted in, and inhabited of him. We have all the encouragement therefore here to build, that a foundation can possibly give us, we cannot have a surer, stronger, more blessed ground than this is; therefore build we up our selves here on your most holy faith.

3. Yea, this also is a great encouragement to us that we have nothing to do but to build up our selves on it; we have not the foundation to lay, a ransom for our Souls, and Sacrifice to make atonement for our sins to get, or seek for, for our selves, a Saviour to provide or procure it for us, nor all things of that nature are done to our hands. *The dinner is prepared, the oxen and fatlings are slain, and all things are ready for our entertainment and nourishment, the ransom is found out and given and accepted, the Lamb for a burnt offering provided and offered up in sacrifice and accepted,*
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peace is made, righteousness is wrought, and Redemption; even eternal Redemption is obtained for us; yea, all things pertaining to life and Godliness made ready, and provided for us, ready to be given us; we have a Saviour, and that a mighty and merciful one, appointed and anointed for us, perfectly furnished with all things that may render him every way able and sufficient to save us to the utmost, able and furnished with the fulness of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding to teach us & shew us the way to life. Yea, he is to become a quickning Spirit, as that he is able in calling us to him, to inlive and quicken us from the dead & make us hear his voice, perceive the truth & goodness of his instructions, and close with him and his grace, able and authorized as the great High Priest over the House of God; and furnished with the Spirit of power and might (*all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily*) to subdue all our enemies, and save us & confer upon us the blessings he obtains for us; yea, to keep off dangers and mischiefs from us, support us under tryals and sufferings, raise us out of troubles and death, both bodily and spiritually, and advance us to glory and happiness. None of these things have we to do, or prepare for our selves. The foundation, a sure and firm foundation is laid for us to our hands: no, nor yet have we it put upon us to bring our selves to and lay our selves upon that foundation, that also is Gods work to make us in Christ Jesus; and that he hath done, inasmuch as he hath brought us to know and believe in him, through his Gospel preached to us, and by his Spirit effectually, in some measure, working in and

and upon us, but onely to build up our selves on that foundation on which he hath, in some measure laid us. Yea, and also,

4. This we have to encourage us therein, that he hath not onely, in and through the most holy faith, given us some furniture of gifts, understanding, &c. for the edifying our selves and one another thereon; but also stands ready in and through his blessed Son, further to assist, direct and help us, and to carry on the building in, and for us, by his own grace and power supplied to us : Which we may also have and receive from him according to our needs, upon seeking it of him, and calling upon him by prayer and supplication for it, according as our Lord hath said, *Ask, and ye shall receive, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you : for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened, Matth. 7. 7, 8. And if ye that are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke 11. 13.*

5. Yea, and whereas we are foolish and brutish in, and of our selves, and not onely want ability to build up our selves of our selves, but also skill to pray unto God for his help and holy Spirit as we ought : he to help us there also, in and through the foundation we are upon, even the most holy faith, gives us the Holy Ghost to help our infirmities, and teach us how to pray, yea, and to make Intercessions in and for us, according to the will of God, with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered, Rom. 8. 26, 27. So that as we have him

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in his gifts, and operations, and vertues in us, to enable us to build up our selves on our most holy faith : so we have him also to help us to look unto and call upon God for further Dispensations of him, and his assistance and help by him, for building up our selves thereon, and for blessing, strengthening and confirming what we build. So that what remains, but that we up and be doing, building up our selves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, and keep our selves in the love of God.

To which the Apostle adds in the next place, The manner how we are to do all this, or the posture we are therein to stand in ; and that is, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal life : In a waiting posture for further mercy, even the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal life. Where we have,

1. The Posture it self, *Waiting.*
2. The Object to be waited for, *Mercy* : Which is further declared what it is by,

1. The Author of it, or Fountain of it, whose, and whence it is; *viz. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. The Tendency, issue and end of it, *Unto Eternal life.*

1. In that it is said, *Waiting*, it is implied and signified,

1. That Believers so edifying themselves on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, may and should hope and look for the further grace, mercy and helpfulness of Christ, and God in Christ: for waiting for a thing, implies hoping for it, as Rom. 8. 24, 25. *If we hope for what we see not, then do*

do we with patience wait for it. * Believers are under the hope of good ; for Good is always the object of hope ; and waiting, something that the soul looks upon as good for it, and it is real good that the soul is instructed of God, to look after and wait for. Now hoping also implies, *

1. That what the soul waits for, is not yet accomplished. The soul hath not an enjoyment of all that is good for it, though it be in the love of God, the fountain of all good and mercy, yet it hath not an actual enjoyment or possession of all the good that flows forth from that fountain. Hope is of things future, not yet seen or enjoyed ; *for that that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for,* Rom. 8 15. The Believer, though in the love of God, and his favour, yet is not fully built up, as we see before, and therefore is not possessed of all that he is building up for, or that is intended to him when built up. *We are saved now by hope,* not by actual sight and enjoyment. The hope of further good, is that that bears up the soul against, and under the sight & feeling of present evils. The condition of the Believer here, is not to be above or beyond hope, but to be in hope ; a lively or living hope, by or through the Resurrection of Christ, as 1 Pet. 1. 3. not a dead, empty hope, that puts no activity into the soul. *Hope is the anchor* of the soul, that enters into the Mercy-seat and Glory within the veil, that stays the soul now up from sinking under any discouragements in the building time, from enemies within or without that oppose and threaten it, or from any tryals or pressures that may lie upon it.

2. It implies an apprehension of some good ground

ground of the expectation of the good that it yet hath not, but waits for, and so it believes that good will come to it that it yet hath not : And indeed, the most holy faith affords it good ground for such an expectation of good ; for *faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of things hoped for*, Hebr. 11. 1. Therefore being on that ground, it must needs see reason and cause to hope : For therein is discovered and declared,

1. That God so loved and pitied them, While in and of the world, as that he sent his only begotten Son, and delivered him up to death for us all, even while ungodly, sinners and enemies against him, to the end that believing in him, they should not perish, but have everlasting life, *Job. 3. 16. 17. And if he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things*, Rom. 8. 32. Having when we were enemies, reconciled us to himself by the death of his Son, how much more shall we be saved by his life, Chap. 5. 10.

2. That Jesus Christ, according to the will of God his Father, hath actually come forth and been manifested in a body of flesh, and dyed for our sins, suffering the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being made a curse that he might redeem us from the curse of the Law, and from under the obligation too of seeking righteousness by the Law, and so of living or dying according as we fulfilled or fell short of that, that so we might receive the adoption of children, that we might be taken into Gods house, and into more near relation to him, and be provided for of all things good for us freely by him. And he that dyed

dyled for us to these ends, to take away those evils that hindred and stopp up the passages of all good, is risen again as a person that hath done and compleated his work he undertook to do by dying, hath paid our debts, satisfied for our sins, and is therefore acquitted and justified of God, and raised up again to prosecute and pursue our good further in the power of God; and this, *that our hope might be in God*, as in 1 Pet. 1. 21. Now seeing that he in Christs death hath removed what might hinder, on his part, good from us, and hath raised up him that had such love to us as to die for us, to remove what might hinder our good, on our parts & to be the Author of good to us; the soul sees good ground thence of lively hope, and is *begotten to a lively hope* of a glorious inheritance *by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. wherein it was made manifest that Christ hath abolished the death, and obtained life and righteousness for us: Especially, since,

3. That Jesus Christ that dyled for us, and rose again, is now on the right hand of God, Angels, and Thrones, and Principalities being made subject to him, so as he hath supreme power over all things for our good; yea, and also liveth ever to make request or intercession with God for us, even for such as come to God by him: And that in the vertues of his most perfect and acceptable Sacrifice, that prevails and prospers for whatsoever he asketh: As also, he shall come again in the power and glory of God, to raise and judge all, and give eternal life and an everlasting Kingdom to all that obey him, 1 Pet. 3. 21. Rom 8. 34. Heb. 5. 9. & 7. 25. Matth. 25. 31. 36. Heb. 9. 28.

4. That

4. That God of his great mercy, and in his goodness, hath called the now Believer to the faith of his Son, and brought him, in some measure, to know and believe on him, and so hath taken him into his house and family, to live upon his Son and his Grace in him: Hath delivered *him from the power of darkness, and translated him into the kingdom of his dear Son*, Col. 1. 12, 13. *in whom there is the redemption* forementioned, and such fulness and sufficiency to save him, and to perfect what concerns him, & hath already so loved as to suffer for him, while a sinner and enemy (as before.) And faithful is he that hath called, to do what yet is needful further to be done, for and in us, 1 *Thess.* 4. 23, 24. we being through his death reconciled, how much more by his life shall we be saved, *Rom.* 5. 10. being brought upon that foundation that is most holy, and that is laid strong and sure for the upholding and sanctifying to God all that is built upon it, how shall he not for that foundation sake, and by it, confer upon us his further grace and blessing, to prepare and fit us for his inhabiting us, and filling us with glory. Seeing also,

5. That God now by vertue of this foundation, or holy faith, loves the Believer, owning him as his, imbraces him as his son, and is become a Father to him; and if God justifies, who is he that shall charge or condemn? If God be for us, who is he that is against us? That is considerable in comparison of him, *Rom.* 8. 31 38. To which add,

6. That

6. That he hath made many gracious and precious promises, in Christ, to the believer in him, abiding on that foundation, and building up himself thereon, and praying to him in the Holy Ghost; yea, promises for his administering grace to him for his abiding, strengthening and building up; as that *he will be with them, and bless them, never leave them nor forsake them: that he will be their God, and they shall be his people: He will be a Father to them, and they shall be his sons and daughters;* yea, godliness hath the promise of this life and that that is to come: for the performance whereof, both Christs Mediation with his Father, and the faithfulness of God ~~are~~ engaged, both by his word and oath (in which two it is impossible for him to lye) in and through Christ are interested; and *faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it,* 1 Thess. 5. 24. Heb. 10. 23. And Christ the great Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession, is faithful in the performance of his undertaking for us also, Hebr. 9. 15. and 3. 1, 2. But besides that, hoping.

2. This waiting implies further, a tarrying for the good hoped for, a patient abiding and staying in the way to the enjoyment of what it expects: In which also two things are contained,

1. That God doth exercise the believer under a want, and with a delay of what mercy and good he hath provided for him, and promised to him. He doth not presently possess the soul of all the good he intends it, nor presently perform all that he hath promised. Though he gives what ever he sees good and meet for its present case, according to that method in which his wisdom hath

ordered

ordered to lead it, yet the great things he hath prepared for it he doth not presently confer. *The vision* (the mercy discover'd & promis'd in the Gospel) *is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie or fail, though it tarry, wait for it* (saith *Hab. 2. 3.*) *because it will surely come, (viz. at the appointed time, beyond which) it will not tarry;* but its for an appointed time, till which it will tarry and not come, or be accomplished. And this God doth,

1. To try and exercise the Believers faith to see and prove whether he doth believe in him or not; and to draw his faith out into exercise, while it grapples with delays, and non appearances to sense and reason, that so it will be, as is said to it. So the word of the Lord tried *Joseph*, while it was not of a good time performed to him; yea, while it seemed improbable to the eye of flesh and blood or carnal reason that ever it should be performed, *Psal. 105. 19.* So God exercised and tried *Abraham's* faith concerning a childe, making him wait 25 years after his coming into *Canaan*, before he performed the promise thereof to him; and so he tried *David*, as pertaining to the Kingdom, &c. for thats an evidence of the Souls believing God and trusting in him, when it yet holds fast its confidence, though he seems to forget his word, and makes no haste to perform it to it.

2. To try and exercise the love of the Creature to God, and to the mercy promised, whether it will yet wait upon him, and stay for his promise or imbrace some other more present injoyment that is more at hand and in its power to attain; if men love not God, nor the mercy promised

at some high rate ; they will let it go, and not stay or tarry for it, they will with *Demas* imbrace this present world; but if they love him and his mercy, they will wait and tarry for it, how ever long it be that he delay it, as *Jacob* that loved *Rachel*, was willing to wait and tarry for her seven years, rather than not enjoy her, and counted it but a small time for the love he had to her, *Gen.* 29. 20.

3. To draw out the desire and affection of the Soul more after him and his mercy that it might long for it, and pray and be earnest with God for it, that so it might not come before it be heartily welcome and acceptable to the Soul, that so also the Soul may be more thankful for mercy, and better prize & use it when it comes; what men come easily and suddenly by they often as little value or regard, but what they long for and earnestly desire and seek after, and yet do not presently finde, that they more prize when they doe obtain: *Abraham* and *Sarah* being long delayed before they obtained a childe; when at length God gave one to them, they called him *Isaac*, because of the joy and laughter that then they had in him, *Gen.* 21. 6. And *Hannah* having obtained a Son after long seeking and waiting, dedicated him to God in thankfulness to him, *1 Sam.* 1. and 2.

4. To humble and mecken them in their hearts and spirits, that so they might not lift up themselves in the mercy enjoyed, as if they had it, either by themselves, or for some worthiness in themselves; but know that they receive it of the Grace of God in his time and at his pleasure, that so he might therein, and therefore be glorified.

fied. Should God give men favours and mercies
 so soon as they desire them, they might be apt to
 be lifted up in and for them, as if their worthiness
 was such, that God gave them with respect there-
 to; or as if their desires did fetch them down,
 and so after a sort by their power they had obtain-
 ed them, but when God withholds his mercies
 for some time, he gives his people in that time to
 see and prove the many weaknesses of their endea-
 vours, and the many distempers and froward-
 nesses in their hearts, the murmurings and
 faintings that they are apt to fall into, and how
 soon they are apt to tire and be weary, if God did
 not in mercy pardon and quicken them, by which
 means they prove that it is not for their own wor-
 thiness that they are at last supplied & satisfied, but
 out of the great goodness of God toward them. Or
 also that it is not by the power of their endeavors
 or desires, but by the power and good will of God
 that they are saved. Thus *Moses* tells *Israel*
 from God that he had *led them forty years in the*
wilderness to humble them and prove them, that he
might do them good in the later end, that they might
 not attribute the Lords giving them the good land
 to their worthiness, but to his goodness, *Deut. 8.*
2. 3. 16. and in Chapter 9. minds them of their
 many failings and great iniquities committed by
 them in that time of tryal, that so they might not
 say when brought into the Land of *Canaan*, that
 for their righteousness he had brought them into that
 Land. Yea, he goeth over it twice or thrice, that
 not for their righteousness, or the uprightness of their
 hearts they did go in to possess that Land, but for the

wickedness of that people God drave them out, and to perform his words sworn to their Fathers, &c. which he demonstrates from the many proofs of their stubbornness which they had given in that time of exercise and trial ordered to them, *Deut.* 9. 4, 5, 6, 7, &c.

5. In a word, God doth thus to prepare his people for mercies, and make them more meet and fit for the injoyment of them, and more thankful for them while they see they are at his pleasure, and in fittest time bestowed on them, that *patience* having its perfect work in them, they might be intire, wanting no good thing, *James* 1. 3, 4. for,

2. There is also in this tarrying a patient bearing that delay, or deferring of comforts, and a still retaining their confidence that they shall be granted, and a keeping the way in which they are directed to expect them, even as he that waits for a man, both goeth to the place in which he hath promised to meet with him, and in the time of his not coming stays there for him till he come: not turning and going ^{away} again though at his first coming and for some time after he there finds him not; yea, and though he sustain some troubles by so staying. *He that believes makes not haste*, *Isa.* 25. 16. *He casts not away his confidence as they that draw back to perdition*, but exercises patience till he have done the will of God therein; and so through faith and patience inherits the promises, *Heb.* 6. 12. with 10. 35, 36, 37, 38. and both those things are joynd together in the Lamentations as answering to waiting for the Lord, *Lam.*

3. 25, 26. for having said, ver. 25. *The Lord is good to the man that waiteth for him to the Soul that seeketh him*, it follows by way of inference, *It is good for a man both to hope, and quietly to wait (or tarry) for Gods Salvation, v. 26.* yea, in waiting is further implied,

3. An earnest desire and seeking after the mercy and salvation of God, as from that inference now mentioned as the consequent from the assertion of Gods goodness to the soul that seeks him is implied. And indeed the heart cannot tarry and wait in hope and expectation of any thing that it hath no desire to enjoy or see. However the outward man might be forced and constrainedly made to stay in a place till such a thing come, yet the heart is gone from it in case it hath no desire after it. An earnest desire then for, and a seeking after this mercy and Grace of God is here also commended to us in this waiting posture exhorted to, that our affections should be after and upon that eternal life in Christ, and that mercy of Christ that is needful to bring us thereunto: and so that we be not slothful nor take up content and satisfaction in what's already attained, as if we had enough and needed no more, *Laodicea*-like: but with our Souls be desiring after God, and with our very spirits longing for him till he satisfie our souls with his goodness, as was *Dauids* posture of waiting for God expressed, *Psal. 130. 5, 6. I wait for the Lord yea, my Soul doth wait, and in his word doe I hope. My Soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning*; a waiting in which is also a

watching for what is waited for ; yea, a most diligent and desirous watching , such as that is of those that being benighted and bewildred for want of light, do long for the morning light. And indeed such a waiting for Gods mercy becomes those that are building up themselves on their most holy faith , and praying in the holy Ghost : for men may pray formally , or put their life and Religion in saying over prayers , and yet have their hearts dead and void of any living desires of Gods presence and favour ; but the praying in the Holy Ghost cannot stand without it, as may appear in what we have said thereabout ; yea, this waiting may have in it further :

4. A waiting upon God in Christ as well as a waiting for him , or for something from him ; a patient attending to him and following after him whithersoever he goes , and to be ordered and directed by him in what ever he requires ; as *Psal.* 123. 1, 2. *Unto thee lift I up my eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants are upon the hands of their Masters, and the eye of the maiden unto the hand of her Mistress, (namely, to be at their appointment, and see and mind which way they direct them to run, as well as to minde what they will give them) so our eyes wait (or are) upon the Lord our God till he have mercy upon us :* in such a sense as that phrase in *Prov.* 27. 18. *He that waiteth upon his Master shall be honoured.* He that attends upon him to know his pleasure and to doe him service ; and this may be included also in this waiting for his mercy, and in that seeking is therein implied , though the o-
ther

ther things seem to be more properly and directly signified.

2. Now the Object to be waited for, is expressed to be *the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal life*. Eternal life is the end but necessary thereto, as the way to bring us to it is the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mercy. But not any or every kind of mercy: There are the tender mercies of the wicked that are cruel, *Prov. 12. 10.* and there is the mercy or kindness of men that are not wicked; but the best of men are but servants to this Lord whose mercy is to be expected. It is the mercy of the Lord whose mercy will reach to more profit than those of a servant; but yet its not the mercy of every Lord neither, but of him who is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, the only begotten Son of God, whom he sent into the world for us, made of a woman, made under the Law, that he might redeem us who were under the Law, that we by the faith of him might receive the adoption of Sons; who being *anointed with the Holy Ghost and power went about doing good, and obeyed his Father to the death, the death of the Cross; and therefore is again highly exalted, and hath a Name* (an Authority and power) *given him far above every Name (or power) that at his Name every knee should bow both of things in Heaven and things in Earth, &c. and that every tongue should confess that he is Lord, to the Glory of God, the Father, Philip. 2. 10, 11. The Lord of all, Act. 10 36. The Lord of men, even of the dead and of the living,*

by vertue of his Death, Resurrection, and living again, *Rom.* 14. 9. and the Lord of Angels; for Angels and Principallities are made subject to him, *1 Pet.* 3. 22. *the Lord of Life and Glory*, *Act.* 3. 15. *1 Cor.* 2. 8. as having the Sovereign Power in and with his Father, to quicken and give life to whom, and as he pleases, *John* 5. 20, 21, 22. being upon the right hand of Majesty in the Highest, filled with all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, *Col.* 2. 9. the fulness, the immeasurable fulness of the Holy Ghost being, resting, and dwelling upon him; and so anointing him and furnishing him with power and sufficiency of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, &c. for the managing the Government and Kingdom of God over men, and over all Creatures, so as in a way of saving mankind from sin, death, devil, and destruction, being the *Saviour of all men* (able, willing, and ready to save all of them upon submission to him; yea, and actually so saving them from manifold evils both within and without, so that they are engaged to, and might submit to him;) *but especially the Saviour of them that believe.* It is the mercy of this great Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who being one with the Father, and glorified with the Fathers own self, upon the account of his obedience to his Father, and love to and sufferings for us men, is often joyned with the Father in the Object of the Apostles prayers for, and so in the dispensations of Grace and Mercy unto men, as may be seen in the Salutations of the Churches in their Epistles to them. *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and*

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the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3. Ephes. 1. 2. Philip. 1. 2. Coll. 1. 2. 1 Thes. 1. 1. 2 Thes. 1. 2. Philem. 1. 3. or *Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Tim. 1. 2. or, *Christ Iesus our Lord*, 2 Tim. 1. 2. or, *the Lord Iesus Christ our Saviour*, Tit. 1. 4. and surely his mercy must needs be of exceeding great concernment unto us above all things; for it is the mercy of God, so as that where he hath and exerciseth mercy, God also, even the Father exerciseth mercy in and by him. And where he shews not mercy, neither doth God the Father shew mercy; nor can the pity and mercy of men, be they never so great or mighty or many, advantage a man, any thing in comparison hereof; the Sovereign power of life and death, yea, of everlasting life or death being in and with him. So that whom he saves and blesses, they are and shall be saved and blessed; and whom he destroys or rejects from his mercy they shall perish everlastingly, for his judgment is true and righteous and takes place and stands fast for ever. His Mercy therefore is worthy the waiting for, and most earnestly to be sought after, as without which there is no salvation or happiness injoyable by us, and as that which is the fountain & well-spring of all blessing and happiness. But here let us view,

1. What is meant by this Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. What that phrase or term of Mercy to be waited for, signifies and hints to us.

1. To

1. To the first. Mercy is either an *affect* in the heart, or,

An *affect* in its work : to take in both of them.

Mercy is properly an affection or frame of heart, in which it pities and compassionates anothers misery and affliction, leading to spare one where there is power to harm him, and to succour him in necessities and indigencies, where there is power to help him.

And this is attributed to God and Christ that he is merciful and full of compassion, ready to forgive offences and relieve in wants and miseries, and do what is good for the Creatures deliverance from evils, and conferring safety and happiness, as may be abundantly seen in the Scriptures, *Psal.* 103. 8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.* Yea, this his Name, *The Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, &c.* *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. And so it is said of Christ, that he is a *merciful and faithful High-Priest*, in *Hebr.* 2. 16, 17. And indeed God and Christ have abundantly manifested their merciful heart toward poor sinful afflicted Creatures many ways. As,

1. God hath manifested himself merciful :

1. In taking pity on mankind when fallen from him into a state of exceeding great sin and misery, in that he did not then cast him off and destroy him : but on the contrary devised a way and means for his redemption and recovery ; yea, such a way of recovery as the translating our sin and misery upon his own onely begotten Son, appointing & in due time sending him forth into the world

world to be the propitiation for our sins, bearing them on his own body on the tree, that through his stripes we might be healed, both abasing him thereto, and exalting him to the height of Glory and Majesty, therethrough at his own right hand, that he might by the vertues of the former, and in the exercise of the latter upon that account bring us back again to God. Herein he hath shewed himself loving and merciful to us beyond all question or expression; as it is said, *Through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring (Christ the bright and the Morning-Star) from on high hath visited us, &c. Luke 1. 78.*

2. God hath also manifested himself merciful to us in freely justifying us (mankind) by his Grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, not imputing to the world their trespasses, but preaching peace to us by him, and through his blood; and opening his Kingdom for us and to us, with gracious calls and counsels and invitations to enter therein, and be made partakers of the blessed privileges thereof unto everlasting life, and in freely admitting and accepting all that obey his calls and counsels therein, however otherwise and formerly sinful and unworthy, as may be seen in Mary Magdalene, the Publicans, harlots, and prodigals whom upon their coming to him, he hath freely pardoned and accepted and made partakers of his righteousness and blessing, as if they never had been so vile and wretched, *Rom. 3. 23, 24. 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20, 21. Eph. 2. 15, 17. Mat. 22. 4, 8, 9, and 9. 12, 13, Luk. 7. 37, 47. & 15. 1, 2, 15, 16, &c. 1 Cor. 6, 9, 10, 11,*

3. God

3. God hath shewed himself merciful to us Gentiles and Heathens, in calling us so wonderfully to the knowledg of his Son, and of his Grace in him, when as formerly we were so gross and grievous sinners against all former dispensations of his goodness and manifestations of himself in his works and providences. It was his great mercy through the blood of his Son to make peace and atonement for us, blotting out all former trespasses & admitting us to fellowship with the Saints, and so with himself through Christ Jesus, as *Ephes. 2. 4, 5, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20.* as it is said, *that the Gentiles might glorifie God for his Mercy, Rom. 15. 9. and who had not in times past obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy, 1 Pet. 2. 10.* whence, *I beseech you by the Mercies of God, offer up your body a living Sacrifice, &c. Rom. 12. 1.* and the like he will shew forth to the Jews in calling them again, and receiving them to favour after all their unbelief and stubbornesses against him, as it is said, *He hath shut them all up in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon them all, Rom. 11. 32.*

4. God hath & doth dayly shew himself merciful unto men, in passing by iniquities, and extending helpfulness to them in their afflictions, which they procure to themselves by their great follies and rebellions, as is also frequently testified in the Scriptures, as in *Psal. 78. 38.* when Israel oft and much provoked him in the wilderness, so as he therefore smote them sometimes with his Judgments, yet being full of compassion forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not; yea, many a time he turned

ed his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath,
So in *Neb.* 9. 16, 17, 18, 19.

5. So also in his patience towards sinners, not willing they should perish, but rather come to repentance and be saved, 2 *Pct.* 3. 9. 15. *Rom.* 2. 4. 5. 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. and to say no more,

6. His readines to hear the cries and prayers of the poor and afflicted, and not to despise their prayers, but to hear and help them, as in *Psal.* 22. 24. yea, to hear the cries of other Creatures, as the young Ravens, and provide food for all flesh, *Psal.* 136. 25. and 147. 9. much more doth he fulfil the desires of them that fear him; yea, he also bears their cries and saves them, *Psal.* 145. 15, 17, 18.

2. So also Christ hath abundantly shewed forth his mercy toward us:

1. In that being in the form of God, not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, yet for our sakes, at the will and appointment of the Father, he abased himself, laid aside his Glory, humbled himself to the Death, the Death of the Cross, and therein bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and was made a curse for us to redeem us from sin and curse, that so he might in the vertues of his sufferings and Sacrifice bring us back again to God. Ye know (saith the Apostle 2 *Cor.* 8. 9.) the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that he being rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He is merciful, full of compassion, and gracious, *Psal.* 145. 8.

2. In pitying poor miserable men in his personal converse with them and ministration to them, while on the earth; *Going about and doing good, and healing*

healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, curing their sicknesses and Diseases, instructing their Souls in pity to them where ignorant and out of the way, *Mark. 8. 2. Act. 10. 38.* As also,

3. In preaching peace by his Spirit in the Apostles, and by their ministration both to the Jews that were near, notwithstanding their rebellious & great despites against him; and to the Gentiles, though so great sinners when far off, after his ascension, *having made peace by the blood of his Cross for them, Ephes. 2. 14, 15, 16, 17. Heb. 5. 1, 2 3.* forgiving great sinners, as *Paul, &c.* And indeed the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to be waited for by believers, is not simply an affection of mercy in him towards us, but his evidencing and demonstrating that his affection of mercy in the acts and exercises of it, but not in giving himself a ransom for us, and dying for us for that is past, and to be believed by us, as a thing done and accomplished already and as the bottom, ground and foundation of all expectation of further mercy, nor will he die any more; but it is for some acts or exercises of mercy for the future in the exercises of those glorious Offices which his Father hath designed him to at and from his right hand: as to say,

1. His passing by and pardoning our sins for his Names sake, hiding, covering, and keeping them, as it were from the eye of God; so as that he mark them not against us, to judge and punish us according to them; as it is said, *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity who should stand, but there is forgiveness with thee, &c. Psalm. 130. 4.* which ver. 6. 7. is called Mercy. And *who is a God like*

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unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage; he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, Mic. 7. 18. And sure this is one main thing, in which he is evidenced to be a merciful High Priest, in that he maketh reconciliation for the sins of the people, and is the standing propitiation for our sins, that we might receive forgiveness of them, Heb. 2. 17. with 1 John 2. 2. So Paul obtained mercy, that is, the forgiveness of his sins, 1 Tim. 1. 13, 16. that's mercy.

2. His sympathizing with us, and succouring us in temptation, afflictions, and sufferings, as is also asserted, Heb. 2. 18. and 4. 15, 16. In that he suffered being tempted, he is able (fit and meet) to succour these also that are tempted. For we have not such an High Priest as cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted even as we, yet without sin. Let us therefore goe boldly to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain (or take as it were at his hands) mercy, and finde Grace to help us in a time of need. Whereas it is evident that mercy signifies something transient, (or passing) from Christ to men, and not onely a thing abiding in the heart of Christ, so what should that be there but the fruits of his sympathizing with us in our infirmities and temptations obtained for us by his intercession for us, as our High Priest; namely, succour in our needs, support in our sorrows and sufferings, and seasonable issues out of them? even as the relieving the poor and afflicted in their poverty and straits, is called the shewing mercy to the poor, Psalm. 109. 12, 16. Prov. 14. 21, 31. and Gods sparing Lots life and helping

helping or hastening him out of *Sodom*, *Gen. 19. 16.* to that purpose was an evidence of his *being merciful to him.*

3. His bestowing any benefit, favour, or blessing upon us, may be called his shewing us mercy, and the said benefit or blessing bestowed may be called his mercy; as all the good God did to and bestowed on *David* is called *his shewing him great mercy or kindness*, *1 King. 3. 6.* and in that sense he is said, *to satisfie*, as well as *to save with his mercy*, and *to crown with loving kindness and tender mercies*, *Psal. 90. 19.* and *103. 4.* and the earth is said to be *full of the mercy of the Lord*; *Psal. 119. 64.* and so the Lord Jesus himself and all the benefits and blessings in him are called, the *sure mercies of David*, *Isa. 55. 3.* with *Act. 13. 34.* and in that sense all the kindness, favour, and blessing dispensed to us by Jesus Christ both for sanctifying and saving the Soul, and for supplying the outward man may be called his Mercy, and may well be understood to be comprised and signified in this expression, *The Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in as much as it is all the fruit and effect of his mercy and pity towards us, and hath in it an abundant relief of our miseries: Yea, and,

4. His glorious coming again to raise the Believer out of the dust, and to put an end to all the sorrows, sufferings, and abasement of his poor Church and people, may well be called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, because an act of his mercy toward them, in pitying their miseries and sufferings, and fully redeeming them out of them all into the enjoyment of the Glory prepared for them.

them. Which also may the rather be understood to be principally and ultimately here meant, because the following words (*unto eternal life*) will best agree with it as the immediate issue and consequent thereof: for that properly may be called the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life, which is an act of his mercy, freeing them from all that keeps them out of eternal life, and brings them to the actual and perfect injoyment of eternal life; though the exercise of his Mercy in all the three former, as necessary to the fitting them for eternal life, and keeping them, to it may also be very well included, as that which the Believer is also to wait for, but principally his coming again, and the mercy thereof, as the furthest and main of all; called therefore *the blessed hope*, Tit. 2. 13. Now,

2. This phrase of the Mercy of our Lord implies something both with reference,

- { 1. To the Term, *Mercy*: And,
2 Its Authors Title, *Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

1. With reference to the word *Mercy*, therein is implied,

1. That the Believers, though upon the most holy faith, the best and absolutely perfect foundation, and though thereon edifying themselves and praying in the Holy Ghost, yet have need of Mercy to be shewed them by Jesus Christ, they are not yet so perfect and compleat in themselves

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or in any of their best and holiest actings, or fullest enjoyments here, but that they need yet mercy to be exercised toward them : And that both,

1. In respect of their sinfulness, weaknesses, and defilements cleaving to them and to all their actings and performances ; for *there is not a just man on earth* (on this side the grave) *that doth good, and sinneth not* (Eccles. 7. 20.) even in his good doings. If we (though Apostles) say *we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us*, says 1 Joh. 1. 8. Thence we need him as the Propitiation for our sins, to cover and hide them from the face of God, and by his Intercession to make acceptable to his Father, even our Spiritual Sacrifices, 1 Pet. 2. 5. and the mercy of Christ in both.

2. In respect of our defects, wants and shortness of attainments to the full possession of the blessing and glory of God, as mercy signifies kindness, or a gift of good for our supplies as we have need ; for the Believer, though compleat in Christ his head and root, yet is not compleat and perfect in his receipt of him, and the grace in him : *hath not yet attained, neither is yet perfect*, Phil. 3. 13, 14. sees but in part, and knows but in part yet, 1 Cor. 13. 11. 12. hath but the first fruits of mercy and blessing, not the full harvest, Rom. 8. 23. He must wait for that till Christs appearing, and therefore needs that act of his mercy towards him.

3. In

3. In respect of afflictions, temptations and griefs in the mean time to be endured : in and under which we have no strength, power or wisdom to uphold us, much less to deliver us out of them; his Grace onely in those cases also is sufficient for us, as well as to the forgiveness of our sins, and the perfecting what concerns us, *Psal.* 138. 8. thence that in *Psal.* 60. 11. *Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man,* and all that he can give us. Herein too we need his mercy and grace to help us; *Heb.* 4. 16. and indeed this is very obvious to sense; for we see the best of men, are men still subject to like passions, infirmities, sicknesses and ailments as others. *Job*, though a perfect man, yet sorely tried both in body and spirit with sad afflictions: the Prophets and Apostles examples of patience, and suffering adversities of divers sorts and natures, under which they have not had ability of themselves to stand, but as God by his mercy in Christ gave them strength and relief, remembering his mercy, in the midst of his judgements. Nay, in the day of the Lord, the righteous servants of God shall need his mercy, for the blotting out perfectly all their transgressions, and deliverance of them from all wrath and judgement, into the enjoyment of his everlasting Kingdom; as it was therefore *Pauls* prayer for *Onesiphorus* and his house, in *2 Tim.* 1. 18. *The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy in that day:* Though he had done very many good deeds for the Apostle, especially in case of sweepings or turnings

aside in some things from him, as may seem to have been his case, or the case of his household, in that that prayer for his household and him follow immediately, upon the mention of the turning away of all those in *Asia* from *Paul*, v. 15. Again, it's here implied in the word, *Mercy* :

2. That the Believers, however diligent in serving God, and edifying themselves on the faith of Christ, deserve not the love of God, or the enjoyment of his presence and blessing with them unto everlasting life, nay, nor any supply to their wants or needs in any thing: It's of mercy, not of merit, that God doth own them, and that Christ takes care of them, and helps and blesses them: They cannot challenge it as matter of due debt, but need to beg (even their daily bread too) as matter of mercy; or as the effect and fruit of the mercy of Jesus Christ towards them, in his Sufferings and Sacrifice offered up for them. And this indeed springs from the former, their weakness to do any thing for God, becoming him or his engagements upon us; and their sinfulness, defiling all their best doings. They have neither power nor purity enough in themselves, to do such service for him as may bind him by way of desert to them: If he should mark the iniquities of their holy things, they could none of them stand, *Psalms*. 130. 3, 4. Therefore good *Nehemiah*, when he had made mention of many good deeds well done by him, adds, *Remember me O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, & for the offices there-*
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of, Neh. 13. 14. and after further mention of his zeal for the Sabbath, he adds again, ver. 22. *Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*: as implying, that his good deeds, though very exemplary, were so far from meriting reward from God, or the love and blessing of God, that it was his mercy to spare him from his judgement, and not to blot out all he had done out of his remembrance. Though God doth give reward to him that willeth that that is good, & that runneth the way of his Commandments, yet that rewarding of them is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth (as the due desert of his willing and running, and what he may challenge as debt) but of him that shews mercy in pardoning the defects of both willing and running, and accepting them and him in whom they are, through Jesus Christ. So that *no flesh hath any thing to glory of in the presence of God*, for any thing found in, as of it, or done by it: But there is cause of abasement and humility for the best; no cause or ground for pride and high-mindedness in any. Christ brings up the top stone with shouting, and crying, *Grace, grace unto it*, Zech. 4. 6, 7. This is implied too in the word *Mercy*, as to be waited for by the believer in all his building up himself on his most holy Faith.

2. But then the consideration of him, whose mercy it is, that we are to wait for, signified in this, that it is called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, doth afford great encouragement to expect

expect and hope for it, as well as engagement to wait for it. For,

1. In that he is the Lord that engages us to wait for it, it being meet to wait on one so great: And if we consider how and upon what account he is the Lord, in the nature of man, that will encourage to expect his mercy, and so to wait in hope of it: For it was by his mercy already testified to us, towards us sinners, while so, in that he then abased himself and became man for us, and as man suffered to the death, the death of the cross for us: that he was in the same nature of man exalted and glorified to be Lord of all, both things and persons, as was above noted, *Acts 2 36. Phil. 2 9, 10, 11. Rom. 14. 9. Because he humbled himself to the death, the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, &c. and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God, &c.* Now if he had such mercy for us, as to purchase to himself in the nature of man, a Lordship over us, by ransoming us from death by his death for us, how shall we not think, that being for that his love to us, and service for us, made Lord, he will exercise his Lordship in a way of grace and mercy toward us, when brought to own him for our Lord, and to subject our selves to his Government over us (as in believing on him we do) and especially, if we therein exercise our selves to more knowledge of him, and obedience to him, as in building up our selves on our most
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Holy faith? If justified by his Blood, much more will he save us from wrath in his Mercy towards us, Rom. 5. 9.

2. And yet more in that he is our Lord; as the Lord of all generally in a more common sense and relation; so the believers Lord in a special sense and relation; as exercising his Lordship peculiarly over and for them, as one owned as their Lord, and depended on for the exercise of his power for their help. yea, he is so the Lord of the Believers as the Husband is Lord of his wife, as he is often stiled in the Scripture language, as in Psal. 45. 10. *Hearken O Daughter, and consider, incline thine ear also and hear, forget also thine own people and thy Fathers house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* And surely he that is, specially the Lord, owner, Head, Husband, and disposer of his people, is both worthy to be waited on by them, and will be more especially merciful to them. He that is good, and a merciful, bountiful Lord over all, and to all his Creatures, so as to open his hand and liberally to satisfy the desire of every living thing, will especially be rich in mercy to all that call upon him, that call upon him in truth, that pray in the Holy Ghost. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him. He also will hear their cry, and he will save them, Psal. 145. 18, 19.

3. That he is our Lord Jesus, that is so our Lord, as also our Saviour, our Lord and Saviour, the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe, 1 Tim. 4. 10 his name was therefore

called Iesus, because he was born into the world and manifested to *save his people from their sins*, Matth. 1. 21. and Believers in him, who are brought to and built upon him are his people in a special sense, his sheep, his flock, his Disciples, yea, his *Body*, whereof he is both the *Head and Saviour*, Ephes. 5. 23. and therefore he is both worthy their waiting on him for his mercy, and they have good ground of incouragement to expect his Mercy in the pardon of their sins and saving and helping in, & out of all their sorrows, afflictions and sufferings, and supplying of their wants in their waiting for it from him: especially seeing also,

4. He is our Lord Iesus Christ, that is, our Lord, that is anointed of God to be our Savior: He is both appointed of God his Father thereto, and furnished with the Holy Ghost and power to fit him thereto. *It is the will of the Father*, his designation, choice and ordination of him, that every one that *seeth the Son and believeth on him should have everlasting life, and that he should raise him up at the last day*, namely, to the enjoyment of that everlasting life. And therefore he being faithful in all things to him that appointed him, as well as merciful and loving to us that believe in him; they that flee to him for shelter and refuge may comfortably expect and wait for his Mercy, even unto eternal life; put all these together. As he is Lord, it implies him to have power and authority to shew us Mercy, as our Lord; relation, and ingagement to exercise his power and authority for our good; as

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our Saviour mercy toward us in his heart, and as Christ or anointed, to save us, an Office and designation of God his Father to shew us mercy according to his great power and goodness, all speak ingagement upon us, and encouragement to us to wait for his mercy, for his mercy in all our present case, yea, mercy unto everlasting life, which is the next thing considerable.

Unto eternal life. Which denotes either the tendencie and issue of his mercy, or the term of our waiting for his Mercy.

1. The Mercy to be waited for, desired, and to be sought after by us, is not only Mercy in this life, or the Mercies or benefits of this life, though they are also in his hand and dispose, and he is ready to impart them to us as he sees good for us; but such Mercy as conduces to and ends in eternal life, such as be the forgiveness of our sins, the giving of his Spirit and Grace to us, his supporting us in all trials and afflictions, his sanctifying us and conforming us to himself in all holiness and goodness, his receiving our Spirits in Death, and raising us up from the dead to eternal life and glory, and the possessing us of it at the day of his appearance, all which are the fruits and effects of his Mercy, and his Mercy stands, appears, and is acted forth in the gift of them to us; they being not the procurements of our goodness, services, or sufferings, or to be looked upon as our merits, things any way deserved by us, but the procurement of his Mercy in his Death and sufferings for us and his Mercy and compassion, and riches of his Grace and bounty

bounty towards us; yea, *eternal life it self is the gift of God through Iesus our Lord*, as the effect and fruit of his Mercy to us, and therefore,

2. We are to wait for his Mercy unto, or until we arrive at eternal life, till we have and attain to the full of that which his Grace and Mercy hath procured for us, and he as our Lord and anointed Saviour is designed to give unto us, and confer upon us, which is included and contained in eternal life, 1 Iohn 2. 24. 25. *This is the promise which he hath promised us, even everlasting life*: which although it be given us, even mankinde in Iesus Christ, inasmuch as he is given of God to us, that he might be received by us, whether we receive him or not; and he is *that eternal life that was with God in the beginning*, and in these last days *was manifested to us*, 1 Iohn 5. 11. and 1. 1, 2. and he hath in him all that will produce in us being received by us eternal life, or an everlasting happy state and condition; as remission of sins, the Holy Spirit of life and power, the presence, favour, and fulness of God and of all Grace and blessing: yea, and though the Believer is said now to have everlasting life, inasmuch as he hath Christ in whom it is, and so hath it by way of right, title, and interest, and some beginnings and first fruits of it, in that he hath the forgiveness of his sins, the Holy Spirit, the favour of God and his blessing in which is life, Psal. 30 5. and 133. 4. Prov. 8. 34. yet that which is most properly eternal life, is that full, perfect and everlasting freedom from all sin, sorrow, and evil;
and

and that full, perfect, and perpetual enjoyment of the glorious presence and blessing of God and Christ, and of his unspeakable glory and glorious joys and satisfactions that shall be enjoyed by all that are counted worthy thereof in the world to come, according to that distinction or distribution of rewards promised by Christ to those that forsake all to follow him, *Mark. 10. 30. he shall receive an hundredfold in this time, houses, & Brethren, and Sisters, & Mothers, and Children, and fields with persecution, and in the world to come everlasting life*, that is the full and perfect enjoyment of God and Christ and all happiness without persecution for ever, till when they are to wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ therein.

This is the great hope of the Believers, as in *Tit. 1. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, hath promised*: and *Chap. 3. 7. That being justified by his Grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*, and therefore the great things hoped for are included therein, because therein is contained all the fulness of the enjoyment of God and Christ, and their favour and blessing, and so all happiness; yea, it is the great thing promised in Christ, as *1 Iohn 2. 25* and therefore it is to be waited for by the Believer all his time till he attain the enjoyment of it; yea, even the Souls of those that have suffered death for the testimony of Christ, and that be under the Altar, though they rest quiet from all further sufferings and persecutions from men, or temptations and oppressions

ons from Sathan, or whatever here annoyed them, yet they also still wait for the full accomplishment of that great promise, the full enjoyment of life everlasting; yea, and the mercy of the Lord Iesus Christ is that that is exercised toward and over them, even his free Grace, goodness, and compassion, until that be attained by them, Rev. 6. 11.

3. And as all his Mercy tends unto ^{this to} the Believer so this also being waited for, shall be the certain and sure issue of his Mercy, they shall not fail of it, but shall have and enjoy eternal life when fully built up and fitted for it. As they have his love and favour toward them here, in which is life; so their patient expectation of the utmost Salvation, and full recompence of reward shall in it's time also (namely, in the World to come) without fail be given them; for,

1. It was the end and design of God in giving his only begotten Son into the World, that *whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life*; as also it was of his exalting and lifting him up, both to the Cross in his Death, and out of the Grave being dead for us, unto his own right hand, and in the Doctrine of the Gospel by his Holy Spirit commending and glorifying him unto the hearts and consciences of men; that so he might be and be represented as a fit and compleat Object of faith, and hope for them, and that so many as should believe and hope in him might live for ever, John 3. 14, 15, 16. *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be*

be lifted up; that so whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the World through him might be saved, &c.

2. It is the will and pleasure of God that Jesus Christ came down from Heaven to doe, and is gone up to Heaven again to prosecute the thing to which he hath anointed and appointed him; the work or pleasure of the Lord that lyes upon his hand to see done, that *whoso seeth and believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life*, John 6 40. And he is both al- sufficient for accomplishing it, having offered up himself a perfect and infinitely virtuous and precious Sacrifice; and being filled with all the fulness of God, and so able to doe all things, and to subdue all things to himself: and he is also faithful in all things to God who appointed him, and therefore *will not fail nor be discouraged till he bring forth judgment into victory*, and accomplish what he is engaged in, and hath undertaken to doe and accomplish, Col. 2. 9, 10. Heb. 7. 25. and 9. 15: and 10. 14. and 3. 1, 2. Isa. 42. 3, 4.

3. It is the promise of God and his Covenant made and ratified with mankind in Jesus Christ, that he will give eternal life to as many as do believe in and are subject to him, 1 John 2. 24. 25. Tit. 1. 2. and God that hath promised, is true and faithful and cannot lye or break Covenant; yea, he hath also confirmed his promise and Covenant by an Oath, *that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for*
 God

God to lye, they might have strong consolation who flee for refuge to Christ, the hope set before them, Heb. 6. 18, 19.

4. Yea, whereas we are too prone to sin, and break our Covenant with God, or fail in what he requires of us to the injoyment of eternal life, Christ hath undertaken, as the surety and Mediator of it, to see it performed to us; and to that purpose to fit us for the performance of it to us; taking away our sins, imperfections, and forfeitures, by the vertue of his blood and Sacrifice pleaded with his Father for us; so as with reference thereto God keeps Covenant and mercy with them that fear him, and Christ effects in us by his Grace and Spirit what is required of us, and necessary for us, *Writing the Law in our heart, and putting his fear in our inward parts*, Heb. 2. 17, 18. and 7. 22, 25, and 8. 2, 3, 9, 10, 11. and 9. 15. and 10. 15, 16, 17, 18.

5. Yea, Christ as the great King of Saints and Nations, Shepherd, and Bishop of the soul, hath undertaken it, to lead, guide, protect, and keep his sheep, or his Disciples that hear his voice and follow him to the injoyment of everlasting life; and he hath the Presence and Oneness of the Father with him therein, and so power, wisdom, and love to guide and keep them, so as none can pluck them away from him, as he saith, *John 10. 27, 28, 29, 30. My sheep hear my voice, and I know (or own) them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father that gave me them*

them is greater than all, and none can pull them out of my Fathers hand. I and my Father are one. So that the Believer hath the greatest certainty of eternal life that may be, in believing, and cleaving unto Christ, and so in building up himself, and being built up on that most holy faith and foundation, and praying in the Holy Ghost, and so keeping himself in the love of God, and waiting for the mercy of our Lord Iesus Christ, having God and Christ so ingaged for his having it given to him, and conferred upon him, to which we may also yet add,

6. The earnest, helpfulness, and guidance of the Holy Spirit given as a pledge or earnest of the full injoyment of the eternal inheritance, and as the Guide, Governour, Leader, Conductor, and Keeper of his Servants that listen to him, and harden not their hearts obstinately against him, to the possession of it. So *Eph. 1. 13. 14. and 4. 30. Believing in Christ* (saith the Apostle to those Believers) *ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his Glory:* and the like in *2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. He that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointeth us, God; who also hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, &c.* And he is a good, holy, powerful Spirit, and will guide the Believer into all truth as he sees it good for him, and will lead him into the land of uprightness, *Iohn 16. 13. Psal. 143. 10* So that as the Believer in Christ hath great encouragement to wait for the Mercy of the Lord Iesus his Lord and Saviour, as is fore-noted; so also hath he good ground

ground to expect and shall assuredly in waiting receive his mercy to everlasting life, so as to the possession and actual enjoyments thereof.

Unto which it is necessary (and that also is here implied) that he be raised up again from Death and all the consequents of it, seeing those things also are allotted to believers and they die as certainly (and oft more grievously in respect of their outward sufferings) than other men, and this Resurrection of them, Christ often asserts, saying, *I will raise him up again at the last day*, John 6. 40, 44, &c. yea, they shall be raised first, and unto life, 1 Thes 4. 15. 16. John 5. 29. even unto life eternal, *Matth. 25. 46*. In which they shall enjoy,

1. A total, full and everlasting release of, and discharge from all their sins, both as to the guilt of them, they shall be fully and for ever then blotted out of Gods remembrance, *Acts 3. 19*. so as they shall be remembred no more, *Hebr. 8. 12. & 10. 17.* and therefore also as to all punishments, chastisements or sufferings for them, *The inhabitant of Zion shall not then say, I am sick, for their sins shall be forgiven them*, Isa 33. 24.

2. A full and perfect deliverance from the inherency and defilement of sin, in a full, perfect and everlasting conformity unto Christ: *When we see him; we shall be like him* (saith 1 John 3. 2.) *for we shall see him as he is*: Then shall it be given to the Bride, the Lambs wife, to be clothed in fine linnen, white and clean, Rev. 19. 8. and to be presented by Christ to himself, altogether glorious and holy, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Ephes. 5. 26, 27.

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3. A full, perfect and everlasting peace and freedom from all trouble, sorrow, crying, pain, temptations, death, either natural or violent : For the bodies of the just being raised, shall be *raised incorruptible and immortal, made like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus*, Death and Grave, and all things pertaining or tending thereto, being swallowed up into an everlasting victory, 1 Cor. 15. 53, 54 55, 56. Phil. 3. 20. and all Enemies and Oppressors, whether men or Devils, being wholly subdued and thrust out, so as they never more have power to molest or trouble : *There shall be no more any Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts, nor any wicked ones to pass through their land, nor any to waste or destroy in all Gods mountain*, Zech. 14. 21. Nah. 1. 13. Isa. 11. 9. & 65. 25. The Devil shall be shut up for ever in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and all his Angels and followers, the Instruments of his malice and mischief with him, and shall be there in everlasting torments, utterly and everlastingly deprived of all power to hurt or injury any of those that here have followed the Lamb. So that all inward causes, as sin, mortality and diseases ; and all outward causes of trouble, as Satan, and his Angels, and all evil men, and all curse and wrath from God being for ever removed, there must of necessity be a perfect freedom therefrom. *No more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall be then wholly passed away*, Rev. 21. 4. 5. & 22. 3.

4. A full, perfect and everlasting enjoyment

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of Christ, and God in Christ evermore present with them, as 1 Thess. 4, 16. *We shall be all caught up together to meet the Lord in the ayre, and then we shall be ever with the Lord*, Rev. 21. 3. *then shall the Tabernacle of God be with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God: yea, the throne of God, and the Lamb shall be amongst them, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, openly and manifestly upon them, and held forth by them*, Rev. 22. 3, 4.

5. Full, perfect and everlasting light and knowledge of God, and of the whole mysterie of God, *They shall see as they are seen, and know as they are known*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *no night of ignorance and alienation from God; no candle light, no dim, imperfect, fading knowledge there; no, nor any mediate light or knowledge, but an immediate, clear and constant light and knowledge shall they have of and from God*, Rev. 22. 5.

6. Full, perfect and everlasting joy and gladness in the presence, knowledge and enjoyment of God and Christ; *for in his presence is fulness of joy and pleasures at his right hand for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. *then they shall enter into their Lords or Masters joy, and that shall be perfectly fulfilled spoken of in Isa. 35. 10 & 51. 11. They shall have everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away; for they shall be then everlastingly and abundantly satisfied with the presence of God and Christ: so as there shall be no want, defect,*

defect or mixture in their joys and rejoycings; nor any thing to be added to them, the want whereof should at any time abate them for ever.

7. Full, perfect, and everlasting glory, being *Kings and Priests unto God*, and filled tull with the glory of Christ and of God, and *reigning with him for ever and ever*, Rev. 22.5. their bodies all glorious, like the glorious body of Christ; and their spirits all glorious, like the Soul or Spirit of Christ: for they shall be like him, enjoying even that eternal glory to which they are now called in and by the Gospel, glory unutterable, and beyond all conception, *2 Thess. 2. 13, 14. 1 Pet. 5. 10.*

This is the portion and inheritance of those that are built up on the most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost, keep themselves in the love of God, and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ thereunto, a portion not merited by them as a due reward of their deserts, but as the fruit of the mercy of Jesus Christ in what he hath done for them in his death, and in what he further doth to and for them in his life, pitying, pleading for, and succouring them all along as the Captain of their salvation; a merciful and faithful Priest, bearing them in his bosom, making reconciliation for their sins, and sending them relief and comfort in their temptations, till having led them through, and fed them in the wilderness (the state of exercise and living by faith here) he bring them safely (in the taking them hence as to their spirits, and in the Resurrection of the just as to their bodies re-

united with their spirits) to the enjoyment of this eternal life and happiness: which is so great and so glorious a condition and enjoyment, as passes and exceeds all expressions and conception. For no man knows, nor can ^{he} enter into the heart to conceive, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him, onely they are in some measure made understandable by the Revelation of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 2 9, 10, 11, 12.

Use. Now both the love of God, and the abiding in it; and this which is the great issue and advantage of it, being all the fruit and profit of the most holy faith built upon, and abidden in: It doth exceedingly commend that most holy faith to us, even the Son of God, that loved us, and gave himself for us, as he is in the Gospel preached and declared to us: And therefore it may serve to move and provoke all persons to love, and imbrace, and close with it; repenting of their neglects and slights of it, and of their running in their hearts and ways after vain and empty words and things, to believe and take heed unto the Gospel and Christ crucified, as therein displayed, that so they may therein discern and be found in the love of God, and be made heirs and enjoyers of this unfathomable, endless happiness, eternal life: *Ho every one that thirsteth, come to these waters (of the knowledge and doctrine of Christ) and he that hath no money, let him come and buy wine and milk without money, and without price: Why do you lay out your money for that that is not bread, and labour for that that will not satisfy you, when in enclining*
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the ear, and coming hither to the most holy faith, and so to Jesus Christ, you may eat that which is good, and let your souls delight themselves in fatness, Isa. 55. 1, 2. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come: and let every one that heareth say, Come: and let him that is athirst, Come: and whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely, Rev. 22. 17. even of the words of Christ, whose words are the words of eternal life, John 6. 68.

2. It shews the marvellous faultiness, and wretched wickedness, as of those that neglect so great a salvation, such a most holy faith, such a precious jewel and pearl of great price as the Gospel is, such a feast as therein is declared and set before us, to run after their Farms and Merchandize: So much more of those that having embraced the Gospel and Christ, as therein declared, and having come to him and tasted of him, and of his sweetness and graciousness, do afterward turn away and fall off from him to some other way or doctrine; or to some other object for delight, stay or satisfaction, *crucifying him to themselves*, and making him and the grace in him of none effect: They do most foolishly and madly for themselves, putting away from them both the love and favour of God, and that which is the product of it, everlasting life, and all that mercy and pity of Christ that leadeth thereunto, and is necessary, and was ready to be extended to them for their attainment thereof. Oh foolish people, and unwise, that do not onely so badly requite God for all his love and mercy in Christ, and grace extended to them by him; but also
reward

reward evil to their own souls, losing them for very vanities and trifles, depriving them of such infinite mercy and happiness, and plunging them into everlasting woe and miseries: Who can express their folly and wretchedness, to sell everlasting life, and that after some good progress towards it, for a mess of pottage. It was a great folly in *Esau* so to sell his birth-right, and in the Israelites, when they were well on their way toward *Canaan*, and in a great likelihood, nay, certainty of enjoying it, in following Gods conduct yet then for a little meat to satisfy their lusts; for leeks and cucumers, &c. for a little pleasure with the Moabitish daughters, when arrived at the borders of it, to forfeit their inheritance in, and perish in the wilderness. But no folly and madness like this of withdrawing from God and Christ to perdition, after the tastes of his goodness, and experience in some measure, of the the powers of the world to come; as *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. O therefore, that we may receive admonition, while it is yet called to day, and avoid or break off from such practises as tend to such a loss, and utter undoing; for *He that transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ (the most holy faith) hath not God, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life,* 2 Jo. 9 11. Jo 5. 12.

3. It shews the infinite happiness of those that be and abide in Christ, in the faith and obedience of Christ, edifying themselves and one another on him, praying in the Holy Ghost, and so doe keep themselves in the love of God, and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ un-

to eternal life, they have the love and favour of God, now as a *Sun and Shield* unto them, and they shall have in the world to come everlasting life: they are in a happy and blessed state and condition, whatever tryals and afflictions doe or may befall them. *Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yes, blessed and happy is he whose God is the Lord*, Psalm. 33. 12. and 144. last. And therefore also,

4. It may encourage and provoke all that do believe in Christ and are upon that precious and most excellent foundation to *abide in him*, and beware of all those things that may indanger their falling and departure therefrom. *Looking diligently lest they, or any of them fail of the Grace of God, and lest any root of bitterness spring up and thereby many be defiled, lest there be any fornicator or prophane person, as Esau, Heb. 12. 15, 16, 17. lest there be found an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, lest any false Prophet or Antichrist deceive any of us, or the love of this world, or of the things of it stealing in upon us withdraw us from Christ, and from the love of the Father which cannot consist with it, and so we be choked and all the Grace of God bestowed upon us prove ineffectual to us. But on the contrary, Exhort we one another while it is called to day, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Considering one another to provoke to love and to good works, so running that we may obtain. Laying hold on eternal life, and suffering no man, or corruption, or evil spirit to deceive us, & deprive us thereof, But let that which we heard from the beginning*

*beginning abide in us; and then we shall continue
in the Father and in the Son, and not fail of the
promise of eternal life; seeing he is faithful
that hath promised, and will perform it, and
perfect what concerns us. Let us not be slothful
then, but followers of them, that through faith
and patience have inherited the promises. Let us
hold fast the profession of our faith without wave-
ring, and not cast away our confidence in God by
Jesus Christ, which hath so great a recompence
of reward: only remember we have need of pa-
tience that we may bear and suffer injuries and
temptations and not faint; but yet hope in the
Lord and quietly wait for his Salvation, wait-
ing for the mercy of our Lord Iesus Christ unto
eternal life, that so when we have done the will of
God, we may receive the promise, which yet for
a little while is deferred, but will not fail to be
performed to those that keep Gods way, and
therein wait for it. He that shall come will come
and will not tarry.*

*Now the good Lord, the God of peace, who
brought again from the dead our Lord Iesus that
Great Shepherd of the Sheep through the blood of
the everlasting Covenant, make us perfect with him,
& in every good work to doe his will, working in us
that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through
Iesus Christ. To whom be Glory for ever and
ever. Amen. Amen.*

March 26. 1664.

F I N I S.

